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ABSTRACT

The guide is designed for teachers of adult basic education students with language backgrounds other than English, limited education, and low literacy skills coupled with relatively high oral skills in English. The first chapter outlines common educational, sociocultural, and linguistic characteristics of this target group. The second chapter suggests ways of responding to and communicating with the students.In the third chapter, a genre approach to language and literacy teaching, which links language and its context, is explained, especially as it applies to adult basic education and specifically, achievement of Australia's Certificate of General Education for adults. Four domains of communication and related curriculum content and structure are outlined: self-expression; practical purposes; knowledge; and public debate. A systemic functional model of language to inform instruction is presented briefly in chapter 4. Chapters 5 and 6 describe an adult basic education teaching/learning cycle and related instructional activities. Two subsequent chapters discuss considerations in creating a supportive learning environment and suggestions for teaching situations in which limited-English-proficient and native English-speakers are taught together. Two bibliographies are included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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A Teacher's Guide to

ENHANCING LITERACY

for Learners with Diverse Language and Cultural Backgrounds, who are studying in Adult Basic Education Programs

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Adult Education in

ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION BOARD
VICTORIA

A Teacher's Guide to

Enhancing Literacy

for Learners with Diverse Language and Cultural Backgrounds, who are Studying in Adult Basic Education Programs

Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Victoria

A Teacher's Guide to

Enhancing Literacy

for Learners with Diverse Language and Cultural Backgrounds, who are Studying in Adult Basic Education Programs

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Introduction

Today there are increasing numbers of Adult Basic Education classes that include students for whom English is their second language. This publication, written for Adult Basic Education teachers who are relatively new to the field, aims to increase awareness of the language characteristics, cultural characteristics and needs of students coming from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

In this publication, the **target group** has been defined as those learners who have language backgrounds other than English, are in ESL Literacy classes or Adult Basic Education classes and are represented by the following characteristics:

- have relatively high oral communication skills and comparatively low literacy levels in English;
- have had limited education in their native country or in Australia; and
- usually are long term residents of Australia or some other English-speaking country.

This target group's language and literacy development has been moulded by two significant forces – their experiences in their ethnic communities, speaking and writing their first language, and their experiences in the wider Australian society communicating through English. These experiences have given learners strengths which they bring to their new learning context. It is important that we, as teachers, build on, and extend these strengths. The publication uses the acronym 'LOTE background' in preference to 'NESB' because the authors believe it is important to describe the learners' first language as **different** rather than the implied deficit of the term 'Non-English speaking

background'. For a more detailed analysis of the implications of terms and acronyms, see *Pedagogy and Politics: Developing Ethnic–Inclusive Practices in the ALBE Profession*, by Davison, Hatcher and Taylor, 1995.

"The Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGE for Adults) is suitable for some, but not all, non-English speaking background learners. It looks after those who have basic education and literacy needs in their first language as well as in English."(Rado and D'Cruz, 1994:73) As has been already acknowledged by many researchers and practitioners, including Hammond et al (1992) in *The Pedagogical Relations Between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy*, beginner learners of English with low oracy levels require separate, more specific language programs before participating in Level 1 of the CGE for Adults. Likewise, the CGE for Adults is less suitable for LOTE background adults who have been well educated in their first language (L1). However, in *English Literacy Provision for NESB Immigrants*, Rado and D'Cruz suggest that the CGE for Adults "can be adapted to the learning needs of the better educated immigrants." (1994:73) This publication does not consider specific adaptations for well-educated immigrants.

Within classes of students participating in the CGE for Adults will be LOTE background and English speaking background (ESB) learners. Both groups of students have literacy needs, yet the language resources they have to draw on will be very different (Yates, L., in *Voices of Experience*, 1994:12). For the LOTE background students, English is their second (or third) language and they may not have had sufficient opportunities to understand the cultural contexts of the spoken and written English language accepted in Australia or to internalise the grammatical constructions of that variety of English.

Throughout this publication **L1** will refer to first language and **L2** will refer to second or subsequent language(s); practitioners are referred to as teachers and this term includes teachers, tutors and trainers. This publication refers to LOTE background learners from a variety of cultures. Many Aboriginal learners, particularly those from traditionally-oriented communities, are also LOTE background students. Much of the material included here will be appropriate for Aboriginal students, but teachers of Aboriginal students need to decide, and perhaps adapt, what is useful for their students.

The information, ideas and strategies in this publication have been developed through surveys and meetings with Victorian practitioners who have been working with LOTE background students and/or have been involved in teaching the CGE for Adults.

This publication identifies the characteristics of the LOTE background learners. It describes some of the differences in educational, language and cultural backgrounds and stresses the importance of the teacher's awareness of, and sensitivity to, these differences. It outlines the Adult Basic Education Genre Approach, which is particularly appropriate for LOTE background learners because it explicitly teaches the structure and language features of text in a meaningful context. This approach is

based on systemic functional linguistic theory, and therefore some terms from this theory are explained in relation to the corresponding terms in the CGE for Adults. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Teaching – Learning Cycle is introduced and ways for implementing it are suggested in Chapters 5 and 6. Although the ideas and activities may be applicable for adult ESB and adult LOTE background students alike, it is the teacher's awareness of the cultural backgrounds and language needs of the LOTE background students and the application of this awareness that enables this to be so. The publication also suggests strategies for creating a supportive learning environment, one which effectively meets the literacy and language needs of LOTE background learners, while both encouraging and challenging them. In the last chapter, the advantages to be gained by integrating ESB students and those LOTE background students with high oracy skills, are discussed. The publication concludes with a reference section containing suggestions for further reading on teaching literacy to LOTE background students and recommended texts and materials for developing classroom activities.

This publication gives teachers a framework (the stages in the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle) and some practical suggestions to assist them in their development of programs to meet the needs of LOTE background learners participating in ABE classes. It suggests that teachers consider their current teaching practices in the light of the cultural and language needs of these LOTE background learners, to ensure that the students' needs are being met, and their opportunities for literacy development are enhanced.

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Chapter 1

The Target Group

Characteristics of the Target Group

In this publication, the **target group** has been defined as those learners who have language other than English backgrounds (LOTE background), are in ESL Literacy classes or Adult Basic Education classes and are represented by the following characteristics:

- have relatively high oral communication skills and comparatively low literacy levels in English;
- have had limited education in their native country or in Australia; and
- usually are long term residents of Australia or some other English-speaking country.

LOTE background students participating in Adult Basic Education programs have language needs that range from those who have no reading and writing skills in any language to those who have developing literacy skills in English and would like to improve in order to do a return to study course and then tertiary study. Many have lived in Australia for more than ten years, cope well with oral English, but want to improve their reading and writing skills. Many L2 learners can communicate effectively with friends both verbally and in writing, but have difficulty when reading the newspaper, instructional material or information brochures and when writing business letters. They have a variety of needs and learning styles.

Like some Aboriginal groups, many migrants and refugees come from a background with a strong oral-tradition. These LOTE background learners are not used to the importance placed on reading and writing in our society. There are differences between those with and without formal education. People from informal learning situations have learning styles and strategies based more on observation and concrete trial and error experiences (Luria et al cited in Ramm,1990: 32). The following chart illustrates some of these differences.

Table 1: Differences in learning styles and strategies found in people with and without formal education

Some people with formal education	⟷	Some people without formal education
can identify patterns and rules in problems	⟷	cannot see relationships or common features in problems
tend to apply logical reasoning to problem solving	⟷	may refer only to arbitrary reasons
are able to use symbolic representation in problem solving activities	⟷	do not readily use abstract symbolic representation
can use context-reduced activities	⟷	use concrete activities
can manage cognitively demanding tasks	⟷	cannot manage cognitively demanding tasks

adapted from Cummins (1986: 153) in Hood (1990: 56)

The characteristics of LOTE background learners will now be described in terms of their educational and sociocultural experiences and their level of proficiency in English.

Educational Experiences

The educational experiences of LOTE background learners are outlined below in relation to the level and type of schooling as well as the attitude to and familiarity with learning strategies:

- Those who have had no formal schooling, are not literate in their first language and have limited numeracy skills. This category includes those who:
  - have not had access to formal schooling and
  - are from preliterate societies (oral traditions) eg Tetum speakers from Timor, Hmong speakers from Laos and some learners from Somalia.
- Those who have had a disrupted educational experience in their home country and have limited literacy and numeracy in their first language. These disruptions may be a result of :
  - school closures due to war
  - long periods of time in a refugee camp

  Some of the students who may have experienced some of these disruptions come from Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Lebanon, El Salvador, Ethiopia and Bosnia.
  - growing up in rural cultures where education for girls was not encouraged beyond primary school.

  Many women from these communities were trained in the domestic skills that were seen as a prerequisite for marriage.
- Those who have had schooling in languages other than their first language, e.g. a Chinese (Hakka) speaking student from East Timor who attended an Indonesian school in Timor, then a Portuguese school in Portugal and finally a school in Australia. These students may be partially literate in more than one language and need the opportunity to consolidate their literacy skills.
- Those who have had some English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction through Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) or other ESL programs and are accustomed to a teaching system that allows for students to learn from their mistakes.
- Those LOTE background learners who come from cultures where formal education is valued highly.
- Those who may come from a cultural background which does not value written texts but places great importance on oral traditions linked to music, drama and dance. These students have no experience with people who read as role models.

- Those LOTE background learners who have 'been through' the education system in Australia and have experienced failure because of language and/or cultural factors. Often they have been mainstreamed too early and did not receive the ESL assistance they required. The age of arrival is a significant factor – those immigrants who arrived in Australia in their teens, having experienced a disrupted schooling in their own country, may not have developed literacy skills in L1 or L2.

- Those LOTE background students have had to learn a totally new script, e.g. Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, Lao, Sri Lankan, Macedonian, Greek, Khmer, Korean.

(For more details regarding language features of L1; type of education system in country of origin; as well as parental attitudes to and expectations of education and teachers see Appendix A, Background Information Chart.)

In many cases, literacy problems are not due to lack of ability, but rather, lack of opportunity. In different circumstances, many of these students would have received education as children and developed skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in their mother tongue. Due to circumstances beyond their control this has not happened. Some LOTE background learners have not experienced any school system and so they do not have the literacy skills or formal learning strategies to transfer to their current learning situation.

Sociocultural Experiences

Some LOTE background learners and some ESB learners may have had similar sociocultural experiences that affect their attitude to learning. These learners may include:

- Those who may have experienced negative or racist attitudes and have feelings of hostility to the dominant culture.

- Those whose experiences in Australia may conflict with their expectations and their own values and cultural practices.

Proficiency in English

The levels of proficiency in English of LOTE background learners may vary widely and include:

- Those with native-like speaking proficiency who are unable to write in English. These high oracy skills sometimes result from having an English speaking partner or from being long term residents who have had many opportunities to speak English either in the workplace or socially.

- Those long term residents whose communication skills are very good but whose language has stabilised, with many non-native-like features after many years of speaking English without having had formal instruction. Another reason their language is stabilised is that they may have received no immediate feedback in the form of a response alerting them to their errors. Because they have been able to communicate effectively they may see no reason to change. (For an explanation of stabilisation refer to Chapter 5.)

- Those who arrived in Australia as teenagers but have had limited experience in Australian schools. Some of these students may no longer write in their native language but can understand it when spoken to by their parents and others. These learners will have literacy difficulties in both L1 and English.

- Those Australian born learners who grew up in an exclusively LOTE speaking household and whose family had limited formal education. They have large vocabulary gaps and experience difficulty in complex, abstract tasks which require more formal and extended reading and writing (Davison, 1989 cited in Davison et al, 1994:18).

- Those who may have limited development of both L1 and L2.

- Those who have had very little experience of using more formal registers in English and would not be aware of the culturally dominant Australian genres.

As the characteristics outlined above illustrate, there is enormous diversity within the LOTE background learner group in terms of their sociocultural and educational experiences. As has already been stated in the introduction, it is not possible to make generalisations regarding particular groups of learners, even those who have backgrounds that may seem to be similar.

Needs of the LOTE background adult learner

Three distinct areas of language use are defined in a survey of 187 adult learners of English (Rado and D'Cruz, 1994: 86). These include:

- The intimate domain – close family circle, relatives and friends
- The social domain – acquaintances
- The public domain – wider community

Two thirds of the LOTE background learners use their mother tongue in the intimate domain, ie with friends, spouse, children and relatives. The survey also found that two-thirds of the learners use English in the public domain and most described their mastery of English as 'very low'(Rado and D'Cruz, 1994:88).

Reasons listed by LOTE background adult learners for wanting to improve their English

The following reasons were provided by students in interviews conducted at Holmesglen College of TAFE.

- To be able to use English in everyday activities, eg health forms, doctor appointments, banking, shopping, CES appointments;
- To develop confidence in speaking;
- To be able to communicate independently without relying on spouse or children to interpret or write for them, eg write letters to children's teachers or letters of complaint or request to business and other organisations;
- To be able to use English for social conversation eg with spouse's work friends;
- To be able to search for jobs, to write applications and go for interviews;
- To be able to speak more clearly, which included improving pronunciation;
- To understand and write telephone messages;
- To understand questions, instructions and explanations;
- To be able to identify other people's feelings and attitudes and to avoid being misunderstood;
- To be able to understand radio, TV, public announcements (eg in shops) conversations, discussions and dialogue;
- To be able to give personal information;
- To be able to greet new people and make social conversation;
- To be able to ask and answer questions; and
- To be able to read the newspaper and be able to read to their children and grandchildren and also be able to assist with their homework.

In comparison with ESB learners, LOTE background learners emphasise the need to improve their speaking and listening skills. The above list of reasons for learning English also reflects the needs of the students as viewed by the authors. These needs do not relate only to speaking and listening. Many of the skills the learners want to develop involve reading and writing.

In terms of their literacy development, ESB and LOTE background learners have different needs. In Chapter 8 there is a table that examines how both groups of students can work together to assist each other. (See Table 8.)

Strengths of LOTE background learners

The following is a list of strengths that members of the target group may have:

- some experience and appreciation of the Australian way of life, including systems and institutions of this society; an enthusiasm and desire to learn more about this country, its history and its people; and a commitment to becoming involved in this, their adopted country;
- well developed listening comprehension in English;
- functional speaking skills in English;
- a rich linguistic background because of bilingualism or multilingualism;
- experience of other culture(s) to provide comparison and contrast to their Australian experience; and
- another cultural, linguistic and social perspective.

The Adult Basic Education Teaching-Learning Cycle, to be discussed and illustrated in Chapters Five and Six, allows for the strengths of LOTE background learners to be recognised and presents an integrated approach for developing the four macro skills.

Chapter 2

Cultural and Language Considerations

Aspects of Cultural Awareness

Regardless of their cultural background, all students are individuals with their own personalities, needs and hopes. In describing cultural differences it is important to stress that there is no typical student from a particular background. Similarly, we do not attempt to describe the 'typical' Australian student from an English speaking background.

Differences in Educational Backgrounds and Learning Styles

- Students who have used a non-Roman script in their first language may be from Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, Sri Lankan, Macedonian, Greek, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Iranian and Korean backgrounds. These students, who have been used to a different system and direction of writing, will need to learn how to form English letters.

- Students from oral cultures may place little value on the written text and may not see the importance of engaging in the reading of texts.

- The written word can play a very important part in certain religious cultures, such as in Islam, where the written word is revered as a form of communication with God in the Koran (Davison, et al, 1995).

- In some cultures the written word represents the 'truth' and students may find it difficult to read critically and openly question what they read as is required in the CGE for Adults.

- LOTE background learners not only need information about the **cultural background of the text** (see Stage 1 – Building the Context in Chapter 5) but they also need assistance with the **'cultural constructedness' of the text** (Davison et al, 1995). Strategies for teachers to use in assisting students in their understanding of the structure of texts in our society are also outlined in Chapter 6 (The ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle).

- For some cultural groups the society, the group, or the family is more significant than the individual. For example, the Balinese 'philosophy of life' reflects the depth and strength of relationships and in Italian families, the honour of the family matters more than the individual. For many other cultural groups, the needs and opinions of parents and elders are believed to be more important than those of the individual.

- Students who have had little formal education and/or come from an oral tradition and are not familiar with written symbols or pictorial representations may at first have difficulty understanding concepts such as **aerial view, historical time, cyclical change, cause and effect** (Ramm, 1990). These concepts need to be explicitly taught. Within the CGE for Adults, both in the Numeracy and the Reading and Writing Modules, understanding of concepts such as these is required and it cannot be assumed that students will have had previous experience with, for example, a house plan. Teachers need to be aware of this and be ready to provide the explanation and support required.

Due to differences in educational backgrounds and learning styles some students from the target group:

- find it difficult to think beyond their own experiences, e.g. to imagine a life story of someone else;

- may be strongly influenced by folk knowledge when perceiving natural phenomena, e.g. the moon as an evil spirit;

- may not be able to transfer knowledge from one context to another;

- have different concepts, or different cultural interpretations, or different semantic representations of space, time, distance, number, relationships, family, classifications;

- take things at face value and may miss the subtleties in language, e.g. they may not be able to recognise the signals that discriminate between fact and fiction or those that mark humour, sarcasm and irony;

- have expectations of what class may be like that differ from the teacher's. These differences could include: talking in class and in discussion groups; student participation in class; questioning of texts and of the teacher and other students; seating arrangements; student responsibility for work and the maintaining of a folio of tasks; and a generally less formal classroom environment; and

- come from education systems that inculcate different cultural attitudes to knowledge. (See Appendix B.)

Many ESB students of ABE would have experienced an education system which held a 'conserving' attitude to knowledge and which required a 'reproductive approach'. These students, if they are involved in basic education programs for the first time, will, like the LOTE background students, have to make a 'cultural' shift as they participate in analytical approaches to learning and are encouraged to actively participate in class. (For a more detailed explanation see Appendix B.)

Suggestions for responding to differences in educational and cultural backgrounds of learners from the target group

Teachers should:

- be aware that some difficulties in learning have a cultural basis, e.g. different concepts of family and time;

- be aware of different expectations of 'school' and how schools operate;

- use materials which have Australian content, provide information about Australia and Australians and create an appreciation of the multicultural diversity of Australia;

- use materials which reflect and value students' backgrounds and which avoid race, gender or class stereotyping;

- encourage students to think beyond their own experiences and see things from a different perspective; and

- promote self-esteem and mutual respect within an atmosphere where cultural differences and similarities are respected and able to be discussed.

Cultural differences in non-verbal communication

Much of our social meaning in an exchange is dependent on and provided by non-verbal clues. These clues involve posture, movement, facial expression, eye movements, gestures, proxemics (use of space – acceptable social distance when talking), paralinguistics (rate of speech, volume, pitch and tone of voice) and all are part of communication. LOTE background learners should be encouraged to focus on **non-verbal communication** as well as stress and intonation to gain meaning from oral text. The way these non-verbal clues are interpreted is very much culture-bound. Although many of the LOTE background students in adult basic education classes have been in Australia for many years some non-verbal characteristics from other cultures will still be evident. Teachers and students need to discuss the misinterpretations that these can cause in communication. Some of these differences are listed below.

Facial expressions : These are not universal. Misinterpretation may interfere with communication. Smiling often indicates emotions other than happiness. In our Western culture it generally indicates friendliness, amusement or benevolence, but it may be masking embarrassment or concealing distaste of someone's behaviour. Smiling can also mask emotional torment (e.g. accompanying a very sad story) and could incorrectly be interpreted as heartless and lacking feeling.

Eye-contact : Lowered eyes can indicate respect and not shyness. Eye contact may be affected by gender differences. Winking may not be understood and/or could be misinterpreted.

Social Distance : There are no universal rules about what is an appropriate space to leave between two people in conversation. In Australia it is seen as customary or polite to stand 60-100cm apart. Closer than this may be viewed as rude or strange. In other cultures, (e.g. Latin America and the Middle East) people stand very close and sometimes breathe into the other person's face – it is a sign of politeness to allow the other person to feel your breath.

Politeness and Respect : Politeness and respect are culture bound. In some cultures young people do not stand with their backs towards older people or sit while their father is standing. Young people do not stand in such a way that they dominate older people who may be seated.

Conventions of Touching : When, where and how people touch varies with different cultures and is determined by factors such as age, gender, social setting, status and emotional climate. Touching the head is taboo for some. Hand-holding with the same sex is acceptable, e.g. for Indonesians and Malaysians.

Hand Gestures : Hand gestures such as pointing, beckoning and waving goodbye can all be misinterpreted. Gestures used in Australia may be held to be obscene to others. Beckoning with the index finger and palm upturned is considered to be rude in Asian cultures.

Suggestions for assisting learners from the target group to understand differences in non-verbal communication

Teachers should:

- not assume the students understand all non-verbal communication;
- try to make verbal and non-verbal communication congruent;
- watch for non-verbal clues to student needs, e.g. be aware that a student may not ask questions or ask for help;
- develop awareness of their own non-verbal behaviour that may be wrongly interpreted by others;
- discuss differences in non-verbal behaviour with students in class; and
- remember that learning the unspoken codes of a culture is much more difficult than learning spoken codes.

Verbal Misunderstandings in Communication

Teachers can assist LOTE background learners with interpersonal aspects of communication such as degrees of politeness, opening, closing and turn-taking in conversations, how to recognise the difference between demands and requests and other subtleties of communicative behaviour.

In guiding students towards communicative effectiveness, stress, rhythm and intonation are more important for intelligible pronunciation than being able to produce vowels and consonants as an L1 speaker does. Teachers should also be aware of the difficulties that occur when moving from a **tonal language**, such as Chinese or Vietnamese, in which changes in pitch and intonation mark a difference in meaning, to a **non-tonal language** such as English, where such changes mark a difference in attitude and emotional meaning. (See Appendix A for other examples of tonal languages represented by the major migrant groups in Australia.)

Awareness of Learner-Writer Characteristics

LOTE background learners may exhibit any of the following general syntactic and semantic language characteristics which can alert teachers to particular needs of individual students. They may:

- use short simple sentences;
- have limited vocabulary – both general and topic specific;
- not hear word endings and therefore may not write them;
- spell phonetically;

- find modal verbs difficult, e.g. *should, could, might, may;*
- experience first language interference, e.g. in the use of the article and in word order;
- have difficulties with grammatical structures, e.g. tenses, word order, subject-verb agreement and prepositions;
- have difficulty expressing ideas clearly and concisely;
- have difficulty analysing and answering questions;
- have difficulty adapting writing to suit different tasks, audiences or purposes. (this will be dealt with in detail in later chapters);
- have difficulty with the structure and organisation of text;
- write informally for all purposes, i.e. speech written down;
- have difficulty in writing without a lot of talking first;
- tend to write about the same topics and write the same kind of texts over and over again;
- not seek assistance from teachers when they get stuck – just stop;
- copy slabs from text books;
- copy other students work;
- be more concerned with getting the task finished than anything else;
- be reluctant to take risks, e.g. to invent spelling.

Many of these characteristics will be shared by ESB learners.

Considerations for teachers when speaking to students from the target group

- Be aware of jargon and colloquialisms which occur in our everyday language, but which may prove difficult for LOTE background learners – it is important to discuss and explain the meaning.

  (*We need to be at the footy dead on time.*
  If I could get on with George, I could get on with my project.
  Come on! Knock it off!)

- Use plain English. (for example – *first* for *initial*)
- Avoid sarcasm and jokes which involve irony and satire.
- Discuss the meaning of idioms and slang. (See Appendix C – Common Classroom Idioms.)

- Simplify the structure of sentences when talking to and giving instructions to students.
  - use short sentences with pauses:

    not *Remember to include your opinion about the topic before the conclusion which should summarise the main ideas of your writing.*

    but *Remember to include your opinion about the topic. Then write your conclusion which should summarise the main ideas.*
  - avoid double negatives

    Don't bring money for your train fare if you don't have to.
  - use direct questions rather than tag questions

    not *You don't have a garden, do you?*

    but *Have you got a garden?*
- Ask open-ended questions – it is culturally difficult for some students to say 'No'.
- Reinforce verbal messages with visual aids and practical "hands on" learning .
- Develop good listening skills and allow students adequate time to answer.
- Rephrase and emphasise what is being taught. You will often need to repeat information. Be aware that students may not 'hear' or distinguish individual words but will 'hear' chunks of speech as one or two words, e.g. *law and order* could be heard as *Laura Norder*.
- Be aware of reference words that cause difficulties,e.g. *thus, therefore, however, as well as, it, which,* and *they.*
- Tape yourself teaching to become more aware of your own use of language.
- Be aware of your own language. Present a good model of oral language which supports the listeners, facilitates their understanding and adapts to their particular needs.

In the oracy stream of the CGE for Adults students are encouraged to develop these same communication skills. (See Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation of the Oracy elements.)

Considerations for selecting and using written material both authentic and teacher-produced

- What students bring to the text: their level of interest, their cultural backgrounds and their prior knowledge
- The cultural and historical understanding and prior knowledge that is assumed by the text
- The appropriateness of the genre and its text structure as well as its level of formality
- The length, complexity, level of abstraction and level of familiarity with the vocabulary, e.g. substitute *burning* for *combustion.*
- The introduction of technical terms without adequate definitions
- The use of unnecessary words, e.g. *it should be observed that*
- The use of colloquialisms, slang words and abbreviations
- The level of nominalisation, e.g. *The existence of this attitude can be confirmed through conversation with the women involved.* This is better expressed by, *You can confirm this attitude exists by talking to the women.*
- The complexity of the sentence structure: long and confusing sentences can be split into two or more shorter ones
- The use of negatives, especially double ones, e.g. *discourage* and *prevent* in the one sentence as in *The parents tried to prevent the child from discouraging his little sister to play the piano.*
- The order of events in a sentence, e.g. *Prior to enrolling and receiving your student card, you will need to phone the college to make an appointment.* This better expressed by, *Ring the college to make an appointment and then come to enrol and receive your student card.*
- The use of embedded clauses (when one clause is interrupted by another) in a sentence can be confusing and difficult, e.g. *Anzac Day, which is a public holiday in Australia, commemorates the first landing of the Anzac troops at Gallipoli in 1915.* This is better expressed by *Anzac Day is a public holiday in Australia. It commemorates the first landing of the Anzac troops at Gallipoli in 1915.*
- The use of cohesive ties in the text like *that* and *which* can assist students to perceive the structure of sentences. *The party, <u>that</u> we voted for, won the election* and *He said <u>that</u> he'd be late.*
- The function and meaning of conjunctive words and phrases like *however* and *despite* and be ready to explicitly teach the meanings and use of these words.

- The layout of the text including graphs, diagrams, tables and headings.

It is important for teachers to be aware of the aspects of written texts that may provide difficulties for LOTE background learners and be ready to teach these structures when students do not understand.

For teachers involved in ABE programs and using the CGE for Adults, it is important to be aware of, and cater for, the differences in educational and language backgrounds of the L2 students. It is equally important to be aware of the similarities that may exist with ESB students in terms of their needs and expectations. In developing programs and negotiating curriculum with the students, emphasis should be placed on the commonalities across cultures. The following chapters describe the genre approach to teaching language skills which is appropriate for LOTE background learners participating in the CGE for Adults.

Chapter 3

The Adult Basic Education Genre Approach

The Interface between the Two Fields – ABE and ESL

The literacy learning needs of long term LOTE background students in ABE programs are met where the two fields of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) overlap. The needs of this group of students demand the pragmatic incorporation of various theoretical positions. This publication advocates adult learning theories incorporated with relevant aspects of the genre theory, for dealing with new contexts; such as the requirements of competency based accredited certificates, and the requirements of funding organisations. While focusing on critical literacy, teachers must also expand the repertoire of their students, develop culturally inclusive practices, reshape competing demands and strengthen the ABE position in the educational field. Teachers gain strength from speaking from a theoretically informed position.

> "If we want to have a say, if we want to participate in defining the field, rather than have it defined for us, then we need to negotiate with these theoretical discourses. If we don't, who will? The only alternative is to leave it to the academics or the bureaucrats, but often these people have lost touch with the field or have never been in it in the first place."
>
> (Pancini, G., 1993:17)

General Characteristics of the Genre Approach

The genre approach to teaching language and literacy skills emphasises the links between language and context. It is a social theory of language.

A practical application of the genre approach to teaching may involve the following steps: the teacher chooses a model text which exemplifies the characteristics of a particular genre, the teacher analyses its schematic structure and linguistic features with the students and then the students use it as a model for their writing. Students are not expected to write a text until they are familiar with both the overall structure and the grammatical features of the genre. The schematic structure of a particular genre is not rigidly predetermined in detail, but the stages of a text and the order of these stages are constant.

This approach emphasises that a specific genre is defined by its cultural context, its social purpose and its intended audience. Students are taught to recognise the purpose of, and audience for, their proposed piece of writing, and then to identify the most appropriate genre in order to use it as a framework for their writing. "Experience with discourse forms (genres) plays a most significant role in communication, and familiarity with their structures is essential to both language use and language learning." (Rado and D'Cruz, 1994:17) A range of genres is studied. "Competency in a range of language styles, contexts and settings needs to be expanded (for long term LOTE background learners). Consider, for example, the participation of factory workers in Quality Circle discussion groups and training programs on site." (McIntyre, P., 1995:184) Within a range of genres, an emphasis on the more formal registers will enable students to write business letters and also increase their access to further education and a wider range of employment opportunities.

There are many interpretations of the genre approach. One interpretation is a strict interpretation in which 'complete and perfect' model texts are given to students. These texts are provided by and often produced by the teacher to enable the teacher to control the features of the text. Students are not encouraged to question the validity and appropriateness of these texts. Teachers start with the whole text, then they deconstruct these 'perfect' models and point out specific linguistic features. Students use these formulaic models as a framework for their own writing (referred to as 'scaffolding'). The emphasis is on the finished product, and not on the process. This strict interpretation is a conformist or prescriptive pedagogy. Manton and Goulborn refer to it as "the new interventionism" (Manton and Goulborn, 1995). Although this strict interpretation may limit students' creativity, it is not a return to traditional grammar or 'back to basics.'

An Adult Basic Education Interpretation of Genre

Adult Basic Education (ABE) practitioners value education as a means of empowering their students, and underpin their practice with psychological principles from adult learning theories. Some of the practices they value are: negotiating the choice of topics and tasks with the students; assisting students to set short and long-term goals; reading for meaning; holistically approaching literacy by integrating listening, speaking, reading, writing and numeracy; critically analysing texts; searching for new perspectives and synthesising prior knowledge with new insights in both spoken and written texts; emphasising the process over the product; and valuing approximations as learners gain control of their listening, speaking, reading, writing, maths and research skills. Students are taught skills to enable them to monitor their own learning and thus become more independent and reflective learners. The classroom is a democratic environment, where choices are based on cooperation and collaborative team work, and where there is mutual respect for all class members – with the teacher valuing what the learners bring to the classroom (their prior experiences and their cultural diversity), and supporting and guiding them to realise their goals. The teacher is a person with expertise who openly demonstrates the processes of reading and writing texts in front of students, while valuing and incorporating their input. The content of these model texts is shaped by the students' input and is not preset to be used regardless of the context. This is in contrast to the teacher who uses 'perfect texts' as models, instead of demonstrating the construction of models with students within a relevant context. ABE teachers involve their students in both "learning to write and writing to learn" (McCormack, R., 1993:38).

LOTE background learners, who are long-term residents of Australia and who have high oracy skills but relatively low literacy skills, limited formal education and little experience with the print media, bring with them learning and language needs which can be best met by balancing the two approaches outlined above. On one hand, they gain by the explicitness of a strict genre approach, especially when genres that are new to them are being introduced. But on the other hand, because the learners have high oracy skills, their understanding of the writing process comes from discussing choices involved in jointly constructing a model. Through this process students gain not only writing skills but also skills to read, reflect and make explicit the ideologies which particular texts represent. As their writing and critical skills develop, students move from strictly following the format and structure of dominant genres, to creating their own model texts. This publication recommends a broad interpretation of the genre approach combined with elements of adult learning theory and ABE 'good practice' and refers to this approach as the ABE Genre Approach.

LOTE background learners who have relatively weak listening comprehension skills can easily be overloaded with non-comprehensible input. These students have usually not lived in an English-speaking society for a long period, or may not have mixed

extensively with native speakers of standard English. They may still be in the initial stages of adjusting to the dominant Australian culture. The needs of such students are best met in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. It is hoped that at a later stage, when these students become more fluent and confident in their oral English language skills, and more attuned to an Australian way-of-life, they will then adopt a more critical stance when dealing with texts, both oral and written. As their skills increase, they too will learn to position themselves as experts producing model texts.

Genres are Culturally Defined

Genres are, to a large extent, culturally defined. Even when dealing with genres which are common to many cultures, like narratives, LOTE background learners may not be familiar with the schematic structure of that genre as realised in a western context. "Narratives are common in all cultures, but vary radically in their structure." (Rado and D'Cruz, 1994:16) Narratives from western cultures often are based on three parts – orientation, complication and resolution. Also themes are often based on the number three e.g. three wishes, three little pigs, three billy goats gruff. In contrast, "The narratives of the Chippewa Indians of North America are based on four parts." (Scollon, R and S, 1981)

A cultural definition of genre is also seen when comparing typical writing structures from various cultures (Clyne, M., 1980). In English-speaking countries, texts have a linear construction, where the end of one paragraph leads on to the beginning of the next one. In these cultures, it is important for students to stick to relevant points in their writing. Texts from Central Europe reflect a freedom to introduce extraneous material and students are praised for their originality. Students are also encouraged to reflect both their specific and their general knowledge, and to write long texts with repetitions and digressions. Texts from Middle Eastern cultures, contain parallel constructions, with the first idea completed in the second part. Asians students write texts that look at a topic from many different tangents, in a circular fashion. Spoken genres also vary. Their tempo and structure are culturally defined. Turkish people often speak in long monologues with few interruptions and Japanese people take short turns and listen attentively to the speaker in between turns. Some societies are more verbal and others are more literate. Australian schools value written essays, while German schools emphasise verbal competence. These are all examples of cultural variations in both spoken and written genres.

The more formal genres of Australian society may be more difficult for learners from diverse cultural and language backgrounds because they may have had little exposure to them (many of these students have had limited access to the dominate culture in Australia) and because the use of them in their first culture may not directly transfer to the dominant Australian cultural context (or may not exist in their first culture or be valued in their first culture).

Some examples to illustrate how genres are culturally defined:

- The layout and content of what is appropriate in a newspaper varies from culture to culture;
- What are considered logical connections vary from culture to culture;
- The tenor and schematic structure of persuasive texts vary according to the culture (refer to Table 7, p.48);
- Some vocabulary may have connotations or cultural interpretations which make it inappropriate in another culture;
- There may be no lexical equivalent translation from the student's first language into English;
- The genre of a postcard is not commonly used in cultures where going away for a holiday is not part of that culture;
- Politeness factors vary from culture to culture and affect what topics are appropriate to cover and how discretely they are handled;
- Culture determines if particular information should be exposed in the public domain or contained in a private domain;
- Politeness factors are realised in conversations, discussions and interviews. Some of the culturally-bound aspects of these exchanges are the conventions of turn taking, the amount of interrupting or overlapping, the tolerance of silence, the degree of friendliness, the use of humour, and the appropriateness of eye contact;
- In some cultures direct questioning is valued as an expression of intellectual curiosity, while in some cultures it is considered rude;
- Some cultures value informality in written genres, while others value formality;
- Some cultures do not sequence procedures temporally;
- In some cultures, power relationships more strictly dictate discourse features than in Australia, e.g. to interrupt or contradict someone in higher authority is often necessary in the Australian work force but would not be condoned in some cultures;
- The use and choice of salutations in letters and forms of address are culturally bound;
- What is considered bragging and whether points of view are understated or overstated vary with culture;
- In some cultures, plagiarism is acceptable;

- In some cultures people do not engage in impersonal, objective debate on matters of public concern because they do not analyse issues from a range of perspectives;
- In some cultures people do not raise hypothetical questions, therefore they view these questions as nonsensical, (e.g. *If you were given a million dollars, what would you do with it? If there was only enough food for seven out of the ten people stranded on a life-raft, after reading their character descriptions, decide who should live.*);
- Some cultures interpret questions as demands and others as non-obligatory invitations. (e.g. *Would you mind closing the door?*);
- Not all cultures use the imperative to write recipes;
- Irony, as a form of humour, does not exist in some cultures.

"It is the cultural value system that determines whether, to a particular group, directness is vulgar or indirectness is devious." (Clyne, M., 1985)

In many Aboriginal communities, indirect questioning strategies are the accepted norm, silences in conversations are viewed as valuable thinking time and not something to be avoided, and it is considered impolite to have direct eye contact, especially with older or respected people (Eades, D., 1982).

A Range of Genres

LOTE background students in ABE classes will need to be exposed to a variety of genres in meaningful contexts by listening to texts, reading them, discussing the main purposes, the authors and the intended audiences of these texts. These students will become familiar with texts by being immersed in meaningful demonstrations of these texts, and they will come to understand accepted Australian genres by having cultural influences made explicit to them, as well as their structure and grammatical features. A range of genres should be taught because expertise gained in one genre does not transfer directly to expertise in another genre, e.g. a student who demonstrates control over narrative text features does not automatically have the skills to control writing an argumentative text.

Using the ABE Genre Approach in Teaching

Students are asked to address the following questions, before writing on a particular subject:

- What do you want to achieve in this piece of writing? (purpose)
- Who is going to read it? (audience)
- Are there cultural and/or social factors that should be taken into account? (cultural context)
- What is the most appropriate genre for this text? (structure)

By focusing on the significance of the social purpose, the intended audience, and the cultural context, LOTE background students will then be ready to discuss what linguistic features are used in particular texts, in preference to other possible forms. Once students have this understanding, the teacher has prepared the students for explicit tuition of the linguistic features represented in that genre. Through discussions of language choices at the text level, students will increase their literacy awareness and develop a shared vocabulary (a metalanguage) for talking about language and how it works.

By studying the structural and grammatical features of texts, students will learn to read texts more effectively. When they are familiar with the way particular genres are constructed, they will be able to predict the content of each stage. "Good readers have the advantage when they pick up a text of knowing what kind of text it is and what its purpose is. They already know how to read the text." (Burns and Joyce 1993:58) Similarly, when students know the function of various grammatical features (a noun, verb, and so on), they can use this knowledge to predict unknown words in context and clarify meanings. Students will also be able to locate cues which point out synonyms, antonyms, examples and summaries.

> "A teacher who, as part of the regular language sessions, talks about, analyses, compares, contrasts and reflects on written texts, whether they be published texts or the students' own writing, not only promotes an interest in written texts, but provides the students with a language that enables them to reflect on and analyse written texts themselves. It enables the students to remove themselves from the process of creating a written text, to objectively analyse and to develop an insight into what makes one text successful and another unsuccessful."
>
> (Hammond 1989:19 in Nunan 1991:152)

This broad interpretation of genre, the ABE Genre Approach, gives ABE practitioners a powerful and effective teaching methodology to use in the classroom. It is especially appropriate to use with LOTE background students who have relatively high oracy skills, because it explicitly teaches literacy and language in a meaningful context and analyses the sometimes subtle cultural and social powers shaping our currently

powerful discourses. Teachers model the processes of reading and writing, guide students in their construction of texts, analyse students' errors, and give students explicit feedback which includes meaningful explanations of language features. The ABE Genre Approach challenges students to reach beyond their current understandings of cultural and social contexts through critical analysis of texts on a more abstract level. This approach can be implemented in the classroom through using The ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. (See Chapter 5.)

Genres in the CGE for Adults

The CGE for Adults covers a variety of genres. (See the tables on pages 42 – 45 in this chapter.) Each genre is positioned within a general context of culture and a more specific context of situation. The context of culture embraces the commonly-shared attitudes, values and experiences of the peoples of that culture and shapes genres to meet the communicative purposes within that culture. The context of situation lists four social areas or domains of the CGE for Adults – Self-Expression, Practical Purposes, Knowledge and Public Debate.

First, students must understand the primary social purpose of texts categorised within each of the four domains. Many texts have multiple purposes, but they are categorised under their primary social purpose. For example, a procedural text may incorporate factual information, but its primary purpose is as a procedural text and this social purpose will dictate its tone, its schematic structure and its linguistic features (refer to Table 7, p.48). Students should be encouraged to write in different genres (ones positioned in different domains) within the same theme or topic. These comparisons make it easier for students to understand the essential differences in the genres.

To help students increase their awareness of the different genres within the CGE for Adults, students can read and write:

- about the same topic but in different registers intended for different audiences;
- to transform one genre to another e.g. using the information from a factual report to write a narrative reflecting personal values; using the information from a personal recount of a holiday to list instructions for a person planning a similar holiday;
- for real audiences beyond the teacher e.g. for other students, for community organisations, for employers, for children, for the public through letters to the editor of various publications, and to businesses and corporations;
- in reflective journals where students outline their understanding of, reactions to and evaluations of various texts they have read. (Texts positioned in different genres.)

Differences in Oral and Written Language

As students develop their understanding of written genres, they will become more aware of the language differences in written texts compared to oral texts. Teachers need to focus on the structure and language patterns of written texts so that students learn how to move from talking to writing. To help students increase their awareness of the differences between oral and written language, students can compare two discourses positioned in the same domain of the CGE for Adults, one in oracy and one in writing.

Comparisons to increase an awareness of the differences between oral and written language:

- a role play or a video of a union meeting, with the minutes of the same meeting (procedures in Practical Purposes);
- T.V. news broadcast, with a newspaper article about the same incident (reports in Knowledge);
- a tape recording of a Parliamentary session, with a copy of the Hansard report of the same session (argument and/or discussion in Public Debate);
- a talk-back radio discussion, with letters to the editor on the same issue (argument and/or discussion in Public Debate);
- oral instructions on how to sow a lawn from a T.V. gardening show, with written instructions on a packet of lawn seed (procedures in Practical Purposes);
- a phone call inviting someone to a party, with a written invitation to that same party (procedures in Practical Purposes).

To help students concentrate on the conventions of writing texts, teachers must make the topic familiar to the students by starting with the students' interests, their areas of knowledge, and their personal experiences. By affirming the value of the students' experiences, and giving them the opportunity to control the content, the teacher will encourage students to position themselves as persons with expertise on that particular topic and to write with authority.

The Evolving Nature of Genres

To help students gain control over a range of texts, the CGE for Adults focuses on a restricted number of genres within each domain. New genres will evolve in response to social and cultural change. Genres are seen as social processes (like categorising, describing, and explaining) and are realised in a product (like a report). By emphasising genre as a process, it is seen as a dynamic state and not as a prescriptive recipe for a product. Once students can successfully write in a particular genre, then they can move beyond its strict structure and creatively adapt a genre structure to meet their specific purposes and intended audiences in a variety of ways.

By focusing on the process of writing specific genres, students can better appreciate that the powerful genres of today's Australia will evolve and adapt to meet tomorrow's needs. Because these genres are not static, they cannot be presented as perfect models. Models are a snap-shot in time. Two examples of recent changes are – the format of resumes has changed over the years, and faxes and E-mail are becoming a common means of communication. Faxes may look formal in their format, but they are often spoken language written down – a combination of a note and a phone call. Technology is allowing a written text to have an immediacy which is closer to a spoken text. As societies change, so do the genres they use. Thus students need to learn how to control the process of meeting specific purposes and audiences at a given time with appropriate texts.

Explanation of the Four Domains in the CGE for Adults

The CGE for Adults, with its four domains, is based on a genre approach. When students understand the requirements of each element of the CGE for Adults, they will also gain a greater understanding of the genres included in the CGE for Adults. The requirements of a particular element are called the performance criteria of that element.

The following section of this chapter examines the four domains of the CGE for Adults, and specifically looks at the writing elements in terms of the subject matter covered, the purpose and the tone within student written texts.

First Domain – Writing for Self-Expression

Examples of genres

When writing texts positioned within the Self-Expression domain, students engage in the processes of recounting, describing and/or narrating, in order to produce the genres of Recount, Personal Sketch and/or Narrative.

Subject Matter and the Purpose for Writing

The main purpose of texts in the Self-Expression domain is the exploration of themes based on personal identity and/or personally relevant cultural traditions. Students are encouraged to include either explicit or implicit personal reflections on these themes. The personal identity may be their own or the personal identity of another, as in a biography.

Usually, texts within this domain refer to specific people, places and/or things that have some personal connection to the writer, and the writer explicitly or implicitly acknowledges and reflects on these personal connections.

The focus is on the personal interpretation of self as opposed to the public undisputed factual self (knowledge domain) or the controversial public image (public debate). If the writer is writing a biographical sketch, and he/she relates the personal side of the subject – feelings, hopes, and desires – this writing would be categorised under Writing for Self-Expression. If the writer lists facts about a person, this writing would be a factual historical account and would be categorised under Writing for Knowledge. If the writer analyses the pros and cons in the role of a controversial public figure and his/her effect on an issue of public concern, then this writing would be listed under Public Debate. Narratives are not bound by facts and they do not have to pretend to be. Self-Expression is the domain where students can, if they choose, use their imaginations to create images, stories and poems.

This is the only domain where the reader has a personal, sometimes intimate, glimpse at the writer's private thoughts. This explains why narrative writers often use a pen name and why our students should be encouraged to keep private reflective journals to record ideas that they might choose to later incorporate into their class writing. Reports and arguments contain personal opinions, but in these genres the personal side is hidden by the tone and language used. These other domains have a formal tone which distances the writer from the reader and which may seem unauthentic and insincere to LOTE background learners who may be unaccustomed to these genres. For these students, "positioning oneself as the author of an exposition entails being able to speak from a position of authority within a domain of social life and this may feel phony, wrong, oppressive, authoritarian or an act of betrayal against one's own kind." (McCormack, R., 1993:36) When writing for Self-Expression,

students may give their personal opinions about issues of personal concern and/or public concern. In contrast, when writing for Public Debate, students must discuss issues of public concern.

The Self-Expression domain is valuable as a balance to the tighter, formal, and publicly more powerful genres taught in the CGE for Adults. Students can become empowered through the opportunity of exploring values on a personal level and through the enjoyment of reading and writing for pleasure.

In the past, ABE practitioners were sometimes criticised for encouraging students to read and write exclusively in the Self-Expression domain. Today, students are encouraged to analyse a healthy balance of genres in and out of the classroom.

Subject Matter/Purpose for Self-Expression

The CGE for Adults specifies:–

Level One	a single experience;
Level Two	two to four experiences;
Level Three	three or more experiences beyond the writer's first hand experience;
Level Four	a range of topics, beliefs, issues and/or experiences.

Tone for Self-Expression Domain

The tone of the piece of writing is the expression of the author's point of view, ranging from subjective to objective. (For a more detailed explanation, see Chapter 4.)

Level One	expresses a personal point of view;
Level Two	expresses a point of view broader than the immediate personal point-of-view;
Level Three	links a personal point of view to general ideas or themes beyond the personal point of view, acknowledges at least one other point of view;
Level Four	expresses viewpoints and values which are not all supportive of his/her personal point of view, writes to express feelings, to convey shades of meaning and to imply attitudes.

Note:
Personal letters and postcards are included in this domain because they contain recounts and descriptions. For LOTE background learners the format of a letter and its envelope may need to be explicitly taught, including salutations and closings.

Second Domain – Writing for Practical Purposes

Examples of written genres

When writing texts positioned within the Practical Purposes domain, students engage in the processes of instructing, and/or requesting, confirming or clarifying action, in order to produce the genres of Procedure and/or Transaction.

Subject Matter and the Purpose for Writing

The main purpose of texts in the Practical Purposes domain is to facilitate functional communication on practical matters in homes, workplaces or bureaucracies. This functional communication consists mainly of instructions to enable someone to carry out a procedure on a practical matter. These texts may be particularly difficult for many LOTE background learners. The instructions could range from an informal phone message to a family member, to a formal recipe (Procedural Text), or a formal letter of complaint written to a specific person, outlining the necessary steps to rectify a problem (Transactional Text).

Procedures and transactions may include factual information, but their main purpose is to instruct someone to act. The reason for including relevant factual information is to supplement, clarify or explain facts which would enable the reader to carry out the procedure or the transaction with greater accuracy and understanding.

Tone for Practical Purposes Domain

Tone in this domain is the expression of the level of formality, ranging from personal to impersonal.

Levels One and Two	not listed in the CGE for Adults;
Level Three	ranges from formal to informal as appropriate for the particular audience;
Level Four	positions himself/herself as a specialist (Procedure);
	positions himself/herself as one with the authority to require action (Transaction).

Third Domain – Writing for Knowledge

Examples of genres

When writing texts positioned within the Knowledge domain, students engage in the processes of investigating, classifying, describing and/or explaining, in order to produce the genres of Report and Explanation.

Subject Matter and the Purpose for Writing

The main purpose of texts in the Knowledge domain is to investigate topics through classification, description and/or explanation of factual information, processes and theories dealing with natural, technological, mechanical, social and/or cultural phenomena. The writer is distanced from the reader through the formality of the text.

The information should be factually correct. Through critical analysis of written materials, students can check sources, and will find that material written as undisputed facts could be unsubstantiated opinions. This will lead students into questioning the validity of some factual reports, and will emphasise the importance of referring to source material and authors when writing factual reports.

Tone for Knowledge Domain

Level One	is written in a formal tone;
Level Two	is written in a formal tone and as if the writer were a researcher or reporter;
Level Three	is written in a formal tone;
Level Four	presents a range of viewpoints objectively and is written in a formal tone.

When writing in this genre, the students position themselves as researchers or reporters with special expertise on a topic related to a specific area of s udy. They can take on another identity and this identity offers them freedom to write from another more impersonal perspective. They write in an objective formal tone without explicitly referring to their personal feelings or opinions. The reader and the writer are emotionally distant.

Note:
News reports are included in this domain, but a newspaper article varies in structure from the report genre. (e page 44 for an explanation of the schematic structure of newspaper reports.)

Fourth Domain – Writing for Public Debate

Examples of genres

When writing texts positioned within the Public Debate domain, students engage in the processes of persuading, arguing, working towards a consensus, recommending and evaluating, in order to produce the genres of Argument, and/or Discussion.

Subject Matter and the Purpose for Writing

The main purpose of texts in the Public Debate domain is to analyse issues of public concern. This is done by stating a point of view and then persuading the reader to agree with this point of view (argument), or by objectively weighing up the two sides of an issue and making a recommendation (discussion). Students provide evidence and examples to back-up the stated position.

Tone for Public Debate Domain

Level One	argues from a personal point of view, can be unconditional;
Level Two	argues from a broader rather than the immediate personal point of view, appeals to the reader's emotions;
Level Three	argues in an impersonal tone with authority, avoids one-sided emotive generalisations;
Level Four	argues in an objective and logical manner, argues for one interpretation over others.

The arguments put forward may well be based on a personal point of view but the formal tone and language used in these texts distance the writer from personally-held beliefs. In writing for Public Debate, the tone is shown in the following sentences.

In Public Debate, students write:

"We must stop the wood-chipping of our native forests." or

"Voting must remain compulsory in our country."

In Public Debate, students would **not** write:

"I believe wood chipping is wrong." or

"I think that voting should be compulsory".

By understanding this distancing from personally-held beliefs, through use of the inclusive "we", students can analyse the manipulation that may occur in advertising and in political speeches.

Organisation of the Writing Elements of the CGE for Adults

The following is an overview of the six categories of performance criteria that students need to address in their writing, regardless of the domain in which it is positioned. These categories are from the Background Works of the CGE for Adults. Within each category are listed the possible areas of performance criteria within that general category. The importance of these areas will vary with each domain, and the complexity of the tasks will increase with each level.

The purpose of this overview is to give teachers a framework, which will facilitate their understanding of, and ability to compare and contrast characteristics of texts positioned in different domains. These categories can also be used as a teaching framework, to inform students of the areas that should be considered when they are writing a text. This overall framework is to encourage students to see their writing in a holistic way. Thus students will be able to evaluate their work from different perspectives, starting with general features of the whole text (purpose/meaning, tone, and over all structure/organisation) and moving to specific features of the text (vocabulary, spelling and grammar). Some of these categories will be much more significant than others. These same categories can be used to provide a framework to give feedback to the students, but should be prefaced with comments dealing with the overall impact of the text.

Subject Matter and Purpose

- Choice of subject matter or topic
- Clarification of the purpose of the text and consideration of its intended audience
- Expression of meaning in the text
- Required level of familiarity with the subject matter (how close the links are to the writer's prior knowledge)

Tone

- Expression of point of view, from subjective to objective
- Level of formality, from personal to impersonal, appropriate to its audience

Language Used

- Appropriate choice of vocabulary, including an awareness of cultural, ethnic and gender portrayal

The following apply to all but the Self-Expression domain:

Exit Level One

The student uses everyday, general terms.

Exit Level Two

The student defines and uses some technical terms.

Exit Level Three

The student defines and uses technical and specialist terms.

Exit Level Four

The student defines and uses precise, detailed technical and specialist terms.

Structure

- Organisation and layout of whole text (appropriate to the genre)
- Logical sequencing of the whole text
- Cohesion of the whole text
- Length of the text

Exit Level One

The student
– writes logically-ordered sentences, and
– links words and phrases into cohesive sentences.

Exit Level Two

The student
– writes a logically-ordered paragraph with a topic sentence, and
– links sentences into a cohesive paragraph.

Exit Level Three

The student
– writes a logically-ordered text, and
– links paragraphs into a short cohesive text.

Exit Level Four

The student
– writes a logically-ordered, cohesive and more complex text.

Spelling

- Appropriate control for each level of the CGE for Adults

Grammar – varies with genre and level

- Linking words – types of conjunctives and other linking devices
- Verbs – tense, types of verb, passive or active voice, modals
- Pronouns – first person, second person or third person
- Nouns – specific or generic nouns, nominalisation
- Adjectives – descriptive words

Range

- the type of subject matter covered in a particular domain

Conditions

The student has:

- access to a dictionary and thesaurus,
- the opportunity to plan, draft and edit texts, and
- the opportunity to use research skills.

The last two conditions included above come from *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria* (Lyons, S. 1994).

Organisation of the Reading Elements of the CGE for Adults

The following is an overview of the categories of performance criteria that a student needs to address in his/her response to a reading, regardless of the domain in which it is positioned. These categories are from the Background Works of the CGE for Adults. To be consistent with the Background Works, these categories have been kept in the same order, but this order does not indicate a prescribed teaching order. Some of these categories will be much more significant than others, and thus should have a greater emphasis. Within each category are listed the possible areas of performance criteria relevant to that category. The importance of these areas will vary with each domain, and the difficulty of the texts will increase with each level.

These categories can be used to inform students of the areas that should be considered when they are reading texts. This overall framework is to encourage students to read in a holistic way, starting with the meaning of the whole text and moving towards understanding specific features of the text. It would be a misunderstanding of the intent of the CGE for Adults, if these categories were used to fragment and undermine a holistic understanding of texts read by students.

The following performance criteria are demonstrated in a student's response to a reading text:

Comprehension

- Identification of the main purpose of the text and its intended audience
- Identification of its key ideas
- Identification of supporting evidence and/or examples

Language Used

- Identification and explanation of vocabulary and descriptive details
- Detection of the cultural assumptions implied by particular words
- Identification and explanation of grammatical features e.g. linking devices, persuasive devices, active or passive voice, choice of personal pronouns

Structure

- Identification of the main stages of the whole text
- Identification of the sequence of ideas and the effect this ordering has on the reader

Application

- Extraction of information to use in writing or oracy tasks
- Examination of links to the student's prior knowledge and experience – personally relevant connections to the subject and/or the author
- Prediction of how someone with a different perspective might view this text
- Completion of a practical task, if appropriate

Critique

- Detection and analysis of the author's point of view as represented in the text (both stated and implied) including attitudes towards age, gender, ethnic origins and cultural differences
- Evaluation of the text, including detection of missing or misleading information and the effect the text has on the reader (including the presentation of the text)

Reading Strategies

- Demonstration of skimming a text for main point/s
- Demonstration of scanning a text for specific details

For a more extensive listing of reading strategies refer to *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria* (Lyons, S. 1994: 105).

Range

Characteristics of the reading text are listed.

Conditions

The student has access to a dictionary of choice.

Organisation of the Oracy Elements of the CGE for Adults

The following is an overview of the categories of performance criteria that students need to address in their oracy, regardless of the domain in which it is positioned. These categories are from the Background Works of the CGE for Adults. Within each category are listed the possible areas of performance criteria within that general category. The importance of these areas will vary with each domain, and the difficulty expressed in the performance criteria will increase with each level.

The following performance criteria are demonstrated in a student's speaking and listening episodes:

Subject Matter and Purpose

- Choice of subject matter or topic
- Clarification of the purpose of the discourse and consideration of its intended audience
- Expression of the meaning in the discourse
- Required level of familiarity with the subject matter (the links to the speaker's past knowledge)

Tone

- Expression of point of view, from subjective to objective
- Level of formality, from personal to impersonal, appropriate to its audience

Language Used

- Appropriate choice of vocabulary, including an awareness of cultural, ethnic and gender portrayal
- Demonstration of linking devices
- Required level of intelligibility (the effect that pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm and the grammatical structure of speaker's language has on the listener's comprehension of the message)

Routines Used in the Speaker's Role

The following routines are used to assess a student's communication level, when he/she is in the role of the speaker:

(a) interactive routines – opens and closes conversations, takes turns and allows others to take turns

(b) chooses the appropriate time to change topics and chooses suitable topics

(c) supports the listeners in the following ways:

- checks for common ground (sets the context),
- checks understanding,

- asks for opinions/information from other participants and then adapts to these points made by others,
- indicates friendliness, and
- understands that others may have different expectations of the exchange.

(d) influences the direction of the discourse

(e) expository routines – describes information and/or sequences ideas

(f) evaluative routines – explains, compares, justifies, and/or draws conclusions

(g) facilitation routines – facilitates the listeners' comprehension in the following ways:

- simplifies grammatical structures, uses ellipsis, set expressions, fillers and pauses; and
- speaks with the appropriate volume and speed.

(h) adaptation/reformation routines – clarifies, rephrases, repeats, summarises, gives examples and/or analogies in order to meet the needs of a particular audience

Routines Used in the Listener's Role

The following routines are used to assess a student's communication level, when he/she is in the role of the listener:

(a) The listener gives feedback to the speaker in a **dialogue** in the following ways:

- checks understanding (indicates his/her interpretations),
- responds to indicate the discourse is being followed,
- prompts the speaker to continue,
- organises turn-taking, and
- indicates reactions to the speaker's statements and intentions.

(b) When listening to a **monologue**, the listener gains understanding of a presentation in the following ways:

- deduces the meaning of unfamiliar terms,
- predicts next part of the discourse,
- infers information not explicitly stated,
- recognises discourse markers, and
- identifies main ideas and distinguishes them from supporting detail.

Conditions – The conditions set for oracy tasks stipulate some or all of the following:

- number of participants involved,
- their relationship,
- role each participant takes and number of turns they take,

- the location and context of the task,
- time taken to complete the task, and/or
- amount of negotiation of meaning necessary in the task.

The conditions (the context) for an oracy element at a particular level of the CGE for Adults, to a large extent, control the level of difficulty of the task. For example, an oracy task in Self-Expression at Level One, might be to chat to a student you know during the coffee break in a class, while at Level Four, a task might be talk to your supervisor or employer about a recent news item and acknowledge each others' perspectives.

Table 2: Routines Used in Oracy

GENRES	**Conversation**	**Interactive Demonstration or Transaction**	**Presentation**	**Discussion**
DOMAINS	**Self-Expression**	**Practical Purposes**	**Knowledge**	**Public Debate**
Episodes	social	support or service	presentation (planned and unplanned)	exploratory
Routines in Speaking				
interactional routines				
opening conversations	✓			
closing conversations	✓			
turn-taking	✓			✓
choosing and changing topics	✓			
supporting the listener	✓	✓		
influencing the discourse				✓
expository routine		✓	✓	✓
evaluative routine			✓	✓
facilitation		✓	✓	
adaption/reformulation		✓	✓	
Routines in Listening				
feedback to speaker in dialogues	✓	✓		✓
listening to a monologue			✓	

Details of the Writing Elements

The following set of tables presents an overview of the subject matter/purpose, text structure and possible grammatical features for written genres within each of the four domains in the CGE for Adults.

The schematic structures and possible grammatical features of the relevant genres listed in these tables are from the CGE for Adults, and its accompanying 'Background Works'. Adaptations were made from the genres explained in Callaghan and Rothery, *Disadvantaged Schools Project*, New South Wales, 1988. For a fuller explanation of these genres, please refer to this project.

When a student decides on a genre to use, he/she must know the schematic structure and grammatical features which should be realised in that genre. The CGE for Adults refers to the schematic structure for the various genres it embraces, but does not clearly set out their stages. This publication lists the stages within each genre under the category – 'structure'. These stages will need to be explicitly taught to LOTE background learners.

The CGE for Adults has a separate domain for Self-Expression. The texts within this domain involve specific participants and give personally-stated reflections or personally-held opinions. The exception, in the CGE for Adults, is in transactional texts, which may also involve specific participants and personally-stated opinions and/or reflections.

The listings of possible grammatical features include the level from the CGE for Adults. The level, given in these tables, refers to when this particular feature has been introduced, and therefore applies to the levels above it as well. If there is no reference to a particular CGE for Adults level listed in the tables, it means that there was no obvious mention of this feature in the CGE for Adults or in its 'Background Works'. Because some important grammatical features for each genre were not included in the CGE for Adults, they have been included in these tables but do not indicate a level from the CGE for Adults. This is not an inclusive list, but a guide to possible grammatical features which may need to be explained while modelling the construction of a particular genre.

Table 3: Genres in the Self-Expression Domain of the CGE for Adults

WRITTEN GENRES	SUBJECT MATTER/ PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
1. Recount *e.g. personal experiences, personal historical accounts, biographies, diaries* Personal letters and postcards are also included in this genre, although they will need adaptations such as salutations and closings.	**to subjectively recount** experiences and/or outline past events exploring personal identity and /or cultural traditions Level 1 – a single experience or activity Level 2 – two to four experiences or activities Level 3 – three or more experiences beyond first hand experiences Level 4 – a range of topics, beliefs, issues and/or experiences, personal and/ or imaginary	1. **Orientation** – includes information to set the context (Level 2 – the context is assumed to be unfamiliar to the reader, so the student must supply all the needed information to set the context) 2. **Events** sequenced chronologically 3. **Personal reflection or conclusion** (optional) this comment becomes increasingly more important the higher the level	– additive linking words (Level 1) – mainly temporal linking words to sequence events (Level 2) – prepositional phrases indicating time, place and relationship – mostly simple past tense – doing verbs (eg drink) and mental verbs (eg think) – mainly first person personal pronouns, third person pronouns in biographies (Level 2) – specific participants – details to add interest
2.Personal Sketch *e.g. descriptions of family, home, favourite place, significant person, personally meaningful object* Also included here are descriptions of future or hypothetical situations, for example, what the world will be like in one hundred years.	**to describe** activities, places, persons, things, or personally held ideas, beliefs, or positions either factual or fictional	1. **Identification** of activity, place, person. thing, idea, belief or position on an issue (Level 2 – the context is assumed to be unfamiliar to the reader, so the student must supply all the needed information to set the context) 2. **Description** or observation in a logical order (may include explanation of why this is personally significant) 3. **Reflection or conclusion** (optional)	– simple present tense – being and having verbs – first person pronouns (Level 2) – specific participants – descriptive adjectives
3. Narrative *e.g. stories (adventure, mystery, romance, science fiction, children's stories, horror stories, historical narratives, parables, fables, myths, legends), anecdotes recorded in personal letters*	**to narrate** a story (real or imaginative) in order to entertain others, may provide a moral to reflect on experiences to extend the reader's imagination	1. **Orientation** – includes information to set the context – the characters, the setting, and the atmosphere 2. **Complication** 3. **Resolution** 4. **Reflection or conclusion or moral** (optional) (Level 4 – Background Works of the CGE For Adults – demonstrates a moral or point in a narrative)	– mainly temporal linking words (Level 2), although it could include foreshadowing and flashback (Level 3 – displays control of narrative chronology) – some additive (Level 1) and causal linking words – mainly doing verbs but also thinking, feeling and saying verbs – mainly in the past tense – could have some dialogue in direct speech – either first person or third person pronouns (Level 2) – specific participants – adjectives for descriptive and emotive text to convey feelings and infer attitudes (Level 4)

Table 4: Genres in the Practical Purposes Domain of the CGE for Adults

WRITTEN GENRES	SUBJECT MATTER/ PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
1. **Procedure** *e.g. recipes, instructions, directions, games and their rules*	to **instruct** by setting out steps to get something done, dealing with practical procedures in homes, workplaces and/or bureaucracies	1. **Goal of the procedure** 2. **List of requirements or materials needed** (optional) (Level 1 – refer to materials in general terms) (Level 2 – include specific factual description of materials) (Level 3 – include detailed factual description of requirements or materials) 3. **Steps to achieve the goal** (Level 1 – refer to steps in general terms) (Level 2 – include specific factual description of procedures) (Level 3 – detailed description of process) (Level 4 – include commentary – warnings or hints to deal with anticipated difficulties or various conditions) – Use appropriate layout, including headings and lists (Levels 2), demonstrate appropriate variations in layout (Level 3), use layout features of different instructional text types, use headings, subheadings and numbers (Level 4) – May include diagrams	– temporal linking words to sequence steps (Level 2) – positional prepositional phrases to indicate location (Level 3) – use of the imperative to start clauses – doing verbs – use of modal verbs – must, should, etc. – generic participants – conditional clauses to indicate alternative action or consequence (Level 4)
2. **Transaction** *e.g. business letters, letters of complaint, letters of request, formal invitations, job application letters*	to **request, to confirm or to clarify an action** in a transactional text dealing with practical procedures in homes, workplaces and/or bureaucracies	1. **Formal opening** or salutation 2. **Identification of purpose** for writing 3. **Details** 4. **Request, confirm, and/ or clarify action** to satisfy purpose in writing 5. **Formal close**	– temporal linking words to sequence events (Level 2) – present tense, including present continuous and present perfect – modals – specific participants – politeness markers e.g. would appreciate – ritualised greeting and leave taking

Table 5: Genres in the Knowledge Domain of the CGE for Adults

WRITTEN GENRES	SUBJECT MATTER/ PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
1. **Report** *e.g. historical accounts, factual biographies, accident reports, crime reports, informational magazines, newspapers, or text books* News reports are included under the category report but they have a different structure – see structure for this variation.	**to classify** natural, technological, mechanical, social and/or cultural phenomena and **to describe and store** facts about various parts and aspects of these phenomena (the information provided usually is gained through researching a topic, or past events)	1. **Opening statement** classifying the subject to a category or categories 2. **Factual descriptions**, arranged in order of importance and grouped into topic areas (Levels 1 – one or two descriptive or explanatory sentences) (Level 2 – a paragraph ordered by classification connections or cause and effect relationships) 3. **Conclusion** and/or recommendations (optional) (may include diagrams , photos or illustrations and/or a list of resources) **News Reports** (type of report) 1. **Headline of news report** 2. **Summary** of news event 3. **Elaboration** of summary 4. **Comments** by participants and/or authorities	– tracking subject through internal referencing – temporal, causal and/or comparative linking words (Level 2) – simple present tense (Level 1) and/or past tense in historical accounts – active verbs (Level 2) – some passive voice – third person pronouns (Level 1) – generic participants – descriptive factual and technical language (Level 2)
3. **Explanation** *e.g. research reports for study, business or government which explain processes and not just list facts*	**to explain** the reasons for natural, technological, mechanical, social and/or cultural phenomena and the processes involved may explain why these processes have developed in the way they have (the information provided usually is gained through researching a topic)	1. **general statement** about a particular phenomenon 2. **logically sequenced explanations** of how and/or why something occurs, include references to information source (Level 3 – sequenced explanations in an orderly system, each paragraph has a topic sentence) (Level 4 – organised paragraphs in a coherent system showing conceptual connections and/or casual relationships) 3. **conclusion**, may include further developments, consequences and/or recommendations (optional) (may include diagrams, photos or illustrations and/or a list of resources)	– causal and temporal linking words (Level 4) – doing verbs – some passive voice – generic participants, often non-human – nominalisation (some condensing of ideas into abstract nouns – Level 3) (dense sentences – Level 4) – abstract and technical language (Level 3)

Table 6: Genres in the Public Debate Domain of the CGE for Adults

WRITTEN GENRES	SUBJECT MATTER/ PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
1. **Argument** *e.g. letters to the editor, advertisements, argumentative essays, argumentative texts in newspapers, pressure group material, political propaganda*	**to persuade** others to agree to a particular position on a matter of public concern **to argue** that position (may appear to be objective but argues for one position not necessarily based on the evidence available)	1. **Opening comment** identifying the issue or reason for writing 2. **Position stated** on an issue, includes any necessary background information (introduced at Level 1) 3. **Arguments** to support that position (Level 1 – no arguments or evidence required) (Level 2 – one argument plus evidence to support that argument) 4. **Summing up** the position	– causal linking words (Level 2) – mainly simple present tense – modal verbs to indicate attitude (Level 2 – uses emotive words) – mostly generic participants – use of nominalisation
2. **Discussion** *e.g. work memos recommending action, academic papers analysing and evaluating issues, government memos, some newspaper articles, pros and cons in letters to the editor* Cultural reviews of films, books, places, events or exhibitions are also included under the category of discussion but they have a slightly different structure.	**to analyse** an issue of public concern objectively, in order to genuinely inform readers by presenting evidence covering two sides of that issue **to work towards consensus** **to recommend** action to resolve the issue based on the weight of the evidence **to evaluate** the quality of a film, book, place, event or painting for potential audiences	1. **Opening statement** identifying the issue, plus any necessary background information 2. **Preview of the two opposing positions**, (Level 3 – identification of the alternative side of the issue) 3. **Arguments for** (Level 3 – two arguments to support position plus evidence to support those arguments) (Level 4 – analyse position and provide several forms of evidence, either references or quotes) 4. **Arguments against** (Level 4 – analytical presentation of alternative arguments plus evidence, either references or quotes) 5. **Recommendations** to resolve the issue Cultural Review 1. **Identification** 2. **Elaboration** of the content 3. **Evaluation** (evaluation may be embedded in stage 2) 4. **Recommendation** for potential audiences	– causal, adversative and/ or comparative linking words (Levels 3 and 4) – mainly simple present tense for views and past tense for examples – mostly thinking and being/ having verbs – no emotive generalisations (Level 3) – use of the passive voice – mainly generic participants, may have some specific participants – use of nominalisation

A suggested order in which to introduce the particular genres of the CGE for Adults for LOTE background learners

Students, at each level, must produce written work covering all four domains of the CGE for Adults. For LOTE background learners, it is best to limit the number of different genres in each domain so as not to overload them and also because the distinctions between genres within the same domain are somewhat obscure. (The exception is in Practical Purposes, where transactions and procedures are two distinctly different genres.) It is better to introduce what are considered simpler genres before introducing more complex ones. Therefore this publication suggests the following order in which to introduce genres to LOTE background learners studying within the framework of the CGE for Adults:

Start with:

Self-Expression	– Recount
Practical Purposes	– Transaction
Knowledge	– Report
Public Debate	– Argument

By comparing the personal and subjective recount, in Self-Expression, with the factual and objective report, in Knowledge, students can see that the topic can essentially remain the same, but that when the purpose, tone and intended audience change, so does the genre.

Students will read a variety of procedures, but they may have a more immediate need for writing transactions.

Students should be exposed to a greater variety of genres in their reading compared with their writing.

Then introduce:

Self-Expression	– Personal Sketch
Practical Purposes	– Procedure and Transaction
Knowledge	– Report
Public Debate	– Argument

In the Self-Expression and Knowledge Domains, the two genres suggested to be introduced next, are both descriptive writing – Personal Sketch and Report. Therefore they can be compared in the same manner as described above.

Again, the range of texts read by students would be greater than the range of student written texts.

Lastly introduce:

Self-Expression	– Narrative
Practical Purposes	– Procedure and Transaction
Knowledge	– Explanation
Public Debate	– Discussion

By Level Three, the whole range of genres in the CGE for Adults will have been introduced.

Chapter 4

A Social Theory of Language

Social and Cultural Contexts

Adult Basic Education classes aim to give students the skills and experience to participate effectively in cultural and social contexts relevant to their community, work or educational lives. These classes also aim to help students critically analyse and evaluate texts and discourses located within these contexts. A social theory of language examines specific contexts, the immediate environment in which a text is actually functioning, and also takes into account the more general cultural and social factors that affect a text. The genre theory, based on systemic functional linguistics, underpins the CGE for Adults. Michael Halliday's work (Halliday and Hasan: 1985) established systemic functional linguistics as an educational linguistic theory with an historical basis in anthropology. "Systemic functional linguistics is a form of linguistics that analyses all aspects of language in terms of their contribution to making meaning." (McCormack, R.1993:34) The aim of this chapter is to show explicitly the links between systemic functional linguistics and the CGE for Adults, and to illustrate why this theory of language development is particularly appropriate to LOTE background learners.

The Basic Concepts of a Social Theory of Language

- Language is related systematically to cultural and social contexts; and particular cultural and social contexts will help determine the appropriate tone and language of a text.

- Texts have evolved certain structures to fulfil cultural and social purposes; and these structures will continue to be culturally and socially mediated.
- Contexts of literacy are not educationally, politically or economically neutral.
- Language knowledge can be made explicit and can be taught within the context of text construction; thus grammar is taught in a meaningful and relevant way.

(adapted from Burns, A. and Joyce, H. 1993: 58-59)

Comparison of Systemic Functional Linguistic Terms and the CGE for Adult Terms

A systemic functional linguistic model looks at the three features of the context of situation – the field, the tenor and the mode. These three variables determine the language choices made in constructing a text in a particular situational context. The table below shows how the categories of the writing elements of the CGE for Adults approximate certain aspects of the field, tenor and mode of systemic functional linguistics. The writing categories CGE for Adults (See Chapter 3, page 34-35) do not correspond neatly to those of systemic functional linguistics, but the approximations help to explain the theoretical basis of the CGE for Adults and this is the purpose for including them here.

Table 7: Comparison of Categories: CGE for Adults and Systemics

Categories from systemic functional linguistic model	Categories from the Background works of the CGE for Adults
Field "What the text is on about." (Halliday and Hasan:1985) The field approximates subject matter in the CGE for adults, although field would also include vocabulary appropriate to the field.	**Subject Matter / Purpose** Exploration of the subject matter, context, and relevant background information. Realisation of the purpose.
Tenor Tenor is concerned with the personal and power relationships between the producer and receiver.	**Tone** Expression of subjective or objective, formal or informal tone as appropriate for the intended audience. ('Tone' in the CGE for Adults can be seen as a consequence of tenor.)
Mode "The part language is playing in the interactive process." (Halliday and Hasan:1985) Includes channel, cohesion and structure.	**Structure** Stages in the schematic structure, cohesion in a text, and whether a text is structured like a spoken or written text (see Table 8).
Different aspects of vocabulary are found in the Field, Tenor and Mode.	**Language Used** Choice of vocabulary specific to a topic and the amount of descriptive detail.
Field, Tenor and Mode are realised by different parts of the lexicogrammar.	**Grammar** Separate category in the CGE for Adults (see Table 9).
Spelling is not part of the Field - Tenor - Mode model.	**Spelling** Separate category in the CGE for Adults.

Table 8: Comparison of Spoken and Written Texts

This table compares the characteristics of spoken and written tasks. An understanding of these distinctions will help students structure their texts appropriately.

Spoken Text		Written Text
has one set of genres	⟺	has another set of genres
context dependent	⟺	not as dependent on context
more spontaneous – unedited or public editing	⟺	preplanned, drafted and edited
fluid in organisation	⟺	fixed in organisation
no record – unless tape recorded	⟺	permanent record, more absolute, more committed
there is a direct relationship between participants (often face to face)	⟺	separation in time and space between participants
body language and other forms of non-verbal communication can have a great impact	⟺	handwriting, layout and presentation can have a great impact
feedback may be immediate, can modify on the spot	⟺	feedback is not immediate
dialogue is jointly constructed, meaning is negotiated	⟺	can't assume shared knowledge, must describe things, people, places, etc.
speakers compete for topic control	⟺	writer maintains topic control
monologue is chained together through sequences of equal status clauses	⟺	discourse is broken into shorter sequences called sentences; within these sentences, the clauses are of unequal length
more personal, more emotional	⟺	maybe intended for an unknown audience with little or no reference to participants, can make detachment easier
more practical	⟺	more abstract and theoretical
based in the here and now, contains language accompanying action	⟺	reflections on distant past or predictions for future
abbreviated forms	⟺	conventional to write out most things in full
low lexical density	⟺	high lexical density (more content packed into each clause) more nominalisation, more qualifying phrases and more modifiers
wordy, repeats itself	⟺	more concise
more informal	⟺	more formal
maybe of a lower status	⟺	maybe of a higher status within institutions, accountability is greater
faster, easier, a natural human attribute	⟺	more like hard work, has to be learnt consciously

Table 9: Comparison of Grammatical Terms: CGE for Adults and Systemics

The following table sets out a comparison of the grammatical terminology used in the CGE for Adults, traditional grammatical terminology and systemic functional linguistics terminology. There are very few grammatical constructions referred to in the CGE for Adults. Again, these comparisons are approximations to help teachers interpret the theoretical basis of the CGE for Adults.

Traditional Grammar Terms	CGE for Adults Terms	Systemic Functional Terms
Conjunctions		
conjunctions	linking words	
	linking devices	cohesive ties – types are: a. conjunctives b. internal referencing c. substitution d. ellipsis e. lexical cohesion
Verbs		
verbs	verbs	verbs realise processes:
doing verbs		a. material – action verbs e.g. walk b. mental – thinking/feeling e.g. believe c. verbal – saying e.g. accuse
	be/have/do	d. relational – being/having e. behavioural – auxiliaries
modal verbs	modality indicates obligation or possibility (emotive words e.g. should, must)	modality – includes modal verbs
tense	past time (in recounts)	tense
passive voice/active voice	passive verbs/active verbs (passive voice in more formal texts)	passive verbal groups/ active verbal groups
Nouns		
nouns		
proper nouns and their descriptors		specific participants
common nouns		generic participants
concrete nouns		
count nouns		
mass nouns		
abstract nouns	abstract nouns & nominalised verbs	nominalisation of verb phrases
Prepositional phrases		
prepositional phrases	phrases to indicate location, time and relationship	prepositional phrases
Pronouns		
pronouns	pronouns – indicate formality	same terminology as traditional grammar
first person	mainly first person (Self-Expression)	
second person	mainly second person (Practical Purposes)	
third person	mainly third person (Knowledge)	
first person plural	mainly first person plural (Public Debate)	
Adjectives and Adverbs	descriptive language	adverbials (includes many prepositional phrases)

Note accompaning Table 9:

Cohesive ties are used to produce logically ordered and cohesive texts.

a. Some examples of conjunctives
   - Additive – and, furthermore, similarly, in addition, also
   - Comparative – like, is similar to, have in common, share, the same as
   - Adversative – but, or, however, on the other hand, nevertheless, in contrast to
   - Causal – so, because, as a result, therefore, consequently, since
   - Temporal – when, while, during, after, first, to begin with, finally, simultaneously, meanwhile, next

b. Other linking devices
   - Internal referencing (tracking of theme or participants within the text, either referring back or forward in the text)
   - Substitution – nominal, verbal or clausal
   - Ellipsis – omission of an item e.g. *I want a pair of new shoes like the pair (of shoes) that Susan bought.*
   - Lexical cohesion – reiteration and collocation (using another word from the same semantic field)

c. What the position of new information in a clause is, as opposed to information already given in the text (given and new), because what comes first in a clause signals special significance.

Chapter 5

The Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle

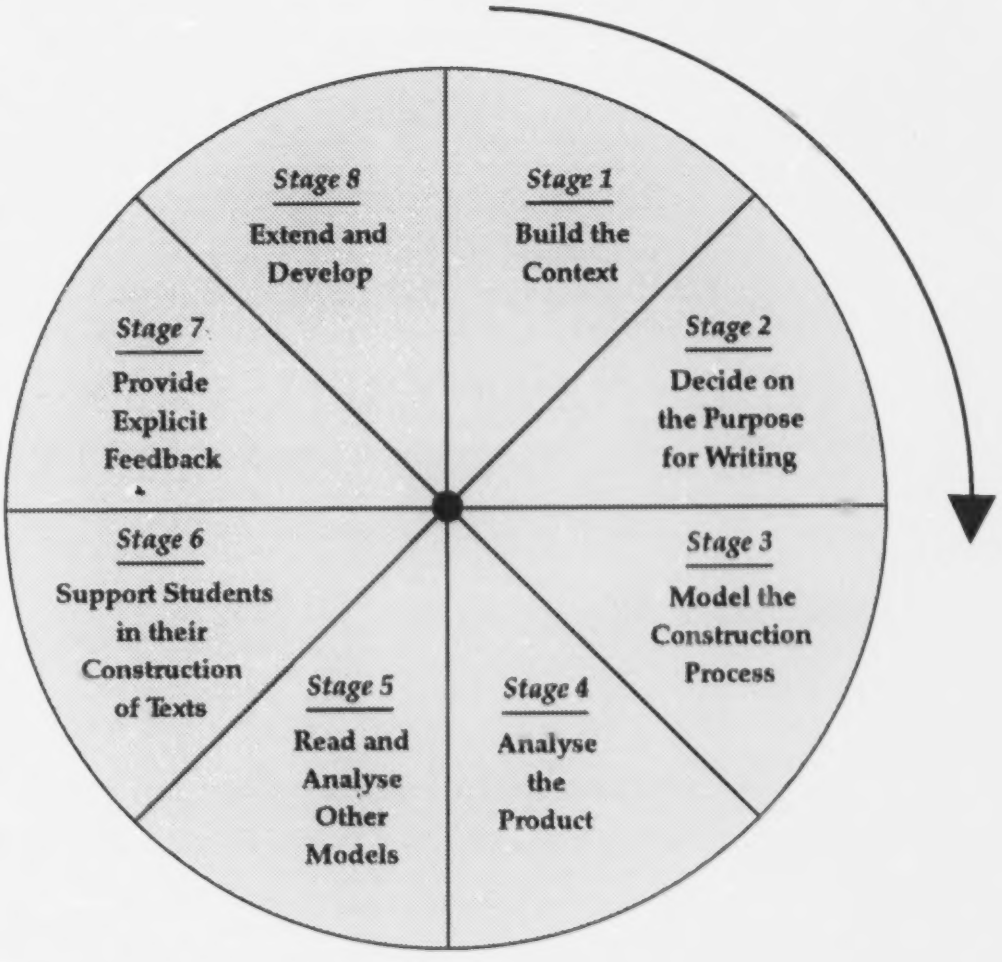
The ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle as a Framework for Teachers

The ABE Genre Approach is put into action in the classroom by following the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. This cycle has been adapted from *Teaching Factual Writing: A Genre-Based Approach*, Callaghan and Rothery, 1988, from the Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW.

The ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle incorporates the development of reading, writing and oracy skills. It is based on the thematic or topic approach which provides a meaningful context, and it also includes learning to learn strategies. This chapter will use the terms for text characteristics defined in the CGE for Adults, instead of systemic functional linguistic terms. (See Chapter 4 for a comparison of the terminology of the CGE for Adults and terminology of systemic functional linguistics.)

The ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle is proposed as a framework to help teachers plan a unit of work based on a particular topic or theme, or to evaluate existing units of work. It also gives teachers an opportunity to consider their current teaching practices in the light of the cultural and language needs of LOTE background learners.

The ABE Teaching - Learning Cycle



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The ABE Genre Approach focuses on the following eight stages of the ABE Teaching - Learning Cycle

Stage 1 Build the Context

The teacher and students jointly build the context of the subject matter in order to familiarise the students with the topic. This is accomplished by exploring the students' prior knowledge, experiences and attitudes on the chosen topic or theme and linking this known information with new material, ideas or experiences.

This stage involves exposing students to new material, including relevant vocabulary, to expand their knowledge of the topic or theme. For beginner readers, this will cover functional social sight words, emergency words, form filling words, and so on. Some ways to explore and expand background knowledge are reading various text types, listening to videos and guest speakers, going on excursions, carrying out surveys in the community and participating in class discussions.

This stage is essential for LOTE background learners because it values what they bring to the learning situation, and gives them a basis to predict reading content and to suggest writing content. Teachers should not make assumptions about students' prior knowledge.

Stage 2 Decide on the Purpose for Writing

Students look at a range of texts related to the topic and group these materials according to the similarities in their purposes, and general text structures. This process builds an appreciation of genres in authentic texts. It is also an opportunity for students to practise reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning.

In preparation for modelling the construction of a text, the teacher and students jointly decide on the purpose of the proposed text, identify the audience and tone for this text, and decide on the appropriate domain for a text of this purpose. They also identify the most appropriate genre to meet the demands of the writing task. (See the tables summarising written genres of the CGE for Adults in Chapter 3, pages 42-45.)

Stage 3 Model the Construction Process

On the overhead projector or on the board, the teacher models the process of organising the stages in the text structure and then models the process of constructing the text. When introducing a new genre, it is best to start with an example of a simple structure like introduction, body and conclusion. In Stage Four, students look at the structure in detail.

As the teacher is modelling the construction of the text, he/she is also modelling the transposing of the students' spoken suggestions into written language. (See Table 8, page 49.) Through class discussion directed by the teacher, the spoken text is reworked (orally edited) until the group decides on the most appropriate structure. During this process, the students will witness the teacher demonstrating the drafting process as he/she crosses out, develops, drafts and redrafts. Often these students lack experience of writing as a process. They tend to see writing only as the polished, final product and therefore they need to be reminded that good writers make many changes as they attempt to make meaning in print.

After constructing the text, the class discusses whether the intended purpose of the text has been met and if the meaning is clear.

Stage 4 Analyse the Product

The class analyses the product from the previous stage in terms of the structure of the whole text, and the purpose of each stage in that structure. They also analyse the vocabulary and the grammar of the text. The students list the grammatical features they think are important to texts within this genre.

Students give opinions as to the effectiveness of the text – whether information is clearly stated, whether it is misleading or if information is missing. This correlates to Critique in Reading Elements of the CGE for Adults.

The teacher explicitly teaches the vocabulary and grammar of the text that are relevant to the students' needs and to their stage of understanding. Grammar is studied in context. Teachers decide on what metalanguage is appropriate to the students at this stage. It is very important not to overload LOTE background learners with too much terminology too quickly.

This is a good opportunity to review previously taught, grammatical features relevant to the genre being studied.

Stage 5 Read and Analyse Other Models

The teacher and students analyse one or more other models of the same genre, in terms of the structure, vocabulary and grammar of the texts; and compare these aspects to the text constructed in Stage Three.

The teacher and students may also compare and contrast the purpose and characteristics of this genre to other genres already studied, and critically evaluate these models.

Knowledge gained in Stages 1-5 is just as crucial to the students becoming more proficient readers, as to them becoming more competent speakers and writers. By studying the structural and grammatical features of texts, students will learn to read texts more effectively. When they are familiar with the way particular genres are constructed, they will be able to predict the content of each stage. They can also use syntactic knowledge to predict unknown words in context, to clarify meanings and to locate synonyms and antonyms. As well, students will be able to locate words and phrases which act as cues pointing out main ideas, examples, summaries, or contrasting points of view (e.g. *on the other hand, in conclusion for example*).

Stage 6 Support Students in their Construction of Texts

The teacher encourages the students in their construction of written texts within the genre being studied.

The teacher values approximations as interim steps in the drafting process on the way towards control of the genre.

At this stage it is important to encourage the students to discuss and 'conference' their written work with each other.

The teacher encourages students to analyse and assess their own work prior to submitting it as a means of increasing their independence in constructing texts.

Stage 7 Provide Explicit Feedback to Students

The teacher provides systematic, comprehensive and comprehensible feedback to students regarding their work, so they can make improvements and resubmit it. This feedback should be both verbal and written, and identify first strengths and then weaknesses. It is most important that teachers affirm the valuable contributions these learners are making, and not project a deficit model.

Correction of errors alone is not adequate. Many students feel overwhelmed by the number of errors in their writing. Teachers need to analyse students' errors and then communicate the resulting generalisations to their students. It is important to set priorities in consultation with the students and decide which features to address in one particular piece of writing and limit instruction to these features at this time.

By examining the types of errors made by all the students, the teacher will also be able to plan what grammatical features should be taught to the whole class and when they would most productively be taught and retaught.

Stage 7 should not be omitted. ABE students from LOTE backgrounds will probably have internalised grammatical patterns which are systematic approximations of the dominant standard English-speaking discourse. Australian Standard English is the variety of English which is spoken and written by the more dominant groups in Australian society, and it is the variety of English which is used in education, the media, the government and the law.

Stage 8 Extend and Develop

The teacher utilises the expertise gained in the above stages to stimulate students' participation in extension activities, e.g. in oral presentations, oral demonstrations, discussions, publications, poster displays, plays, and readings of their work.

Non-standard spoken and written English of the target group

Some of the reasons why students from the target group speak and write non-standard English are:

- When they were first learning spoken English, they were not given immediate and appropriate feedback to alert them to their errors, so they could not consciously or subconsciously adapt their developing English towards the standard of the general community;
- They subconsciously realised that they had reached a stage in their language development that met their communicative needs, however limited these needs were;
- They were restricted in their access to the standard English-speaking community (limited quantity of interaction), and were not immersed in environments where the language featured correct grammatical patterns of standard English (limited quality of interaction); and/or
- Learners may have come to the psychological crunch (may be subconscious), where to become more fluent in standard English would mean the sacrifice of their cultural identity largely determined by their first language dominance.

Most of the students from the target group have learned English through listening to it, and not by seeing it in a written form. These internalised grammatical patterns will be *stabilised*, temporarily halted or plateaued, in these students' language patterns at a particular level of development. Usually, the particular features which are stabilised deal with form rather than meaning. These people have generally been able to make themselves understood in the wider Australian community, and therefore there was no immediate need to change language patterns which conveyed their intended meaning.

Now these LOTE background learners are in literacy classes, usually for the first time, and have the opportunity to move their stabilised language closer to the standard English of the dominant discourses. They are motivated to improve their English language skills in order to retrain for future employment, or possibly, they are motivated by the opportunity to study because they have seen their children achieve academically in Australia and feel that they too have this potential. (For a discussion on standard English, see Goulborn, B. and Manton S., 1995.)

Some examples of grammatical variations from standard English that do not change the speakers' or writers' intended meaning are: marking past time or future time with terms like last week, yesterday or tomorrow and not altering the verb tense from the present form; omitting articles, connectives and word endings; or using an inappropriate form of a pronoun. Students may become conscious of language patterns when they see them in writing and have a chance to examine and reflect on them (e.g. how to mark plural nouns with -s, past tense with -ed, how to separate blended phrases into separate

words), while these same patterns may be very difficult for them to hear in their spoken language. The mere oral correction of variations from the dominant discourse will have little impact on altering these variations. Through seeing their language in writing, through meaningful explanations of particular language patterns, through explanations of the possible misunderstandings which might arise when using stabilised forms, and through repeated opportunities to practise standard forms of English in meaningful contexts, these students with stabilised oral patterns can begin to write standard English.

When LOTE background learners perceive their language as a systematic development towards standard English which reflects generalised syntactic rules and not just as 'full of mistakes', they see their language development in a more positive light.

Students should be encouraged to differentiate between contexts where standard English is the most appropriate variety to use and those situations where the use of non-standard English is an acceptable way of expressing themselves. The ability to switch from one code to another depending on the context, needs to be valued. (See Chapter 7, Correcting students' work.)

For a more extensive explanation of *stabilised* language learners, refer to *A Time to Learn*, edited by Faine, M., Smith, B. and Tinney, L., published by ACFE Board, Units 1 and 2, 1993.

Comments on the ABE Teaching - Learning Cycle

This cycle is particularly applicable to LOTE background learners, because of the extensive modelling and the explicit instruction in both schematic structure and grammatical features. This ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle may be a bit restrictive for ESB learners if they have internalised the dominate genres, their schematic structures and grammatical features.

The cycle represents a guided and supported approach to teaching the genres of reading, writing and speaking. It starts with building the context, because this is a way to value and utilise the group's knowledge and experiences. The teacher, with the oral help of the students, shapes this input into a text by modelling the process of writing. Later, they read and analyse other models, which then leads the students to writing their own texts.

Oracy is seen as an essential element in each stage. LOTE background learners of the target group, whose literacy skills are below their level of oracy, depend on their oracy for most of their communication. Their functional oracy in English is one of their strengths. "The way we teach students to think, analyse and critique is dependent to a large extent on spoken language. Argument and discussion can sharpen our perception and understanding and help to extend thinking. This is particularly true for adults for whom reading and writing are a painful chores, and who

rely on the spoken word for most of their communication." (Suda, L., 1993: 71)

A particular stage of this cycle may be dominated by one or two skills, but throughout a cycle there should be a balance. For example, Stage 1 is mainly listening, speaking and reading, while Stage 6 is mainly writing. In Stage 8 students give presentations and demonstrations. Knowledge gained in Stages 1-5 is just as crucial in improving students' reading skills, as their writing skills. By understanding the purpose and structure of various genres, students can predict features of texts and use this knowledge to read more effectively. This knowledge also enables them to evaluate the effectiveness of texts positioned within a particular genre. The other stages of this cycle integrate the processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as research skills.

This cycle will need to be adapted to meet the needs of various groups of students, at different times in their learning. Some stages will be omitted if the students have had sufficient experience already. At other times, students may return to stages already covered to deepen their understanding of a particular genre. The time spent on each stage will vary. For example, if a new genre is being introduced, a substantial amount of time will be spent on listening to and reading examples of these texts in Stage 1 – Building the Context.

At all stages in this cycle, teachers reflect on and then assess students' products, they monitor students' progress and evaluate the effectiveness of their program. At the end of each stage, teachers and students decide if the students are ready to move on to the next stage. Information would include students' self-assessment and group feedback.

At the completion of a teaching-learning cycle, teachers plan the next cycle by negotiating the choice of the next topic or activity.

The ABE Teaching-Learning Cycle should be useful for teachers of LOTE background learners in most Adult Basic Education contexts. (Refer to Chapter 2 for specific cultural and language considerations.)

The second part of this chapter gives two examples of this ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle in practice in the classroom.

The Teaching-Learning Cycle in Practice

This section includes examples of how the Adult Basic Education Teaching-Learning Cycle was used with a group of students at Holmesglen College of TAFE. Holmesglen TAFE is located in the Melbourne suburb of Chadstone.

The group included men and women aged between 19 and 63 years. They have varied educational backgrounds ranging from little or no formal education in their first language to primary or early secondary education in their first language. They are long term residents from Turkish, Polish, Greek, Chinese and Vietnamese backgrounds.

The students had been participating in the CGE for Adults for six months and had already had opportunities for class, group and individual construction of written texts within the four domains of the CGE for Adults. They have relatively high oracy skills with some *stabilised* language features.

Example One - A Christmas Theme

Objectives:

- To enable learners to become more aware of the differences in purpose, structure and tone of two different genres in the writing domains of the CGE for Adults – Writing for Knowledge and Writing for Self-Expression;
- To enable learners to become more aware of the similarities and differences between spoken and written language;
- To research a familiar topic and extend it to less familiar contexts;
- To provide the opportunity for students to share information about their own cultural traditions and experiences with another student, and to share this knowledge gained with other students;
- To listen to, take notes and join in questions and answers with a guest speaker.

Stage 1 **Build the Context**

As it was early December, the students were already beginning to discuss their preparations for the approaching holidays season. The teacher and students decided it would be interesting to develop the theme of Christmas with an emphasis on Christmas traditions both past and present.

Explore the students prior knowledge, experience and attitudes

Class and group discussion and simple writing activities had already focussed on "What do Christmas celebrations mean to me now and what do I remember of special celebrations when I was a child?"

Now the students decided to extend this theme to how Christmas is celebrated in various cultures, and whether there have been significant changes in the way Christmas has been celebrated in these cultures over the past generations.

Stage 2 Decide on the Purpose for the Text

The class was divided into six groups of three students each. Each small group of students decided on a particular culture's Christmas celebrations to research and then write about.

It was decided the proposed text would be a report and that the tone would be formal. Students were quite familiar with discussions about the purpose, the audience and the tone of the text and also with words to discuss the text (the metalanguage). The domain in the CGE for Adults would be Writing for Knowledge.

In order to gain factual information, the students went to the library to research their chosen culture's Christmas celebrations. They listed resource materials and took notes.

Stage 3 Model the Construction Process

The teacher decided to model a report on Hungarian Christmas celebrations based on information from two source books. She chose Hungarian Christmas celebrations because she planned to invite an Hungarian friend to speak to the class. This was an opportunity to explore the topic prior to the guest speaker coming. This preparation would get the students thinking about Hungary, its climate, its religions, and so on. It was also an opportunity for the students to begin to plan their reports on Christmas celebrations in the cultures they had chosen.

The teacher, using the overhead projector, worked with the class to organise the following stages in the structure of a report:

1. an opening statement,
2. factual descriptions, and
3. a conclusion.

The teacher read the source materials to the students and discussed the information. The class decided to write the text in the past tense because the source materials described an Hungarian Christmas in the 1950's.

Students then suggested sentences for constructing the text. The teacher and students discussed the changes that are required in transposing students' spoken suggestions into written language. As the teacher wrote the text on the overhead, both students and teacher experienced the drafting and redrafting process as many changes and improvements were made to the text.

The teacher and students then decided whether the intended purpose of the text had been met and if the meaning was clear.

Edited version of the report constructed on the overhead

How Hungarian Children Celebrated Christmas in the 1950's

Children in Hungary celebrated their Christmas on the evening of the 24 December. In the 1950's, Christmas was a special celebration for the whole community.

One month before Christmas, the parents started to prepare for the celebration. They cleaned their homes to prepare for the coming of baby Jesus. Mothers baked Christmas biscuits and Christmas cakes that would keep for the Christmas celebration.

On Christmas day, mothers prepared traditional food, such as fish and poppy seed or walnut rolls.

In Hungary, the Christmas tree was not displayed until Christmas eve. The children believed Baby Jesus and his angels brought the Christmas tree and gifts. But it was the parents who decorated the tree in secret, so it could be a surprise for the children. The tree was decorated with lots of little lit candles, baubles, garlands of tinsel, tiny lollies wrapped in coloured tissue paper, and a silver star on top. The ringing of a bell was the signal for the children to enter the room to see the Christmas tree. Families sang a special Christmas carol in front of the tree, and then they opened their presents.

Christmas eve in Hungary was very important to all the people because it was the evening they celebrated the birth of Jesus.

Information Source –

Zangalis, C. and Clarke, P., 1988, Christmas for Children, HODJA EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES COOPERATIVE LTD., Clifton Hill, Australia

Stage 4 Analyse the Product

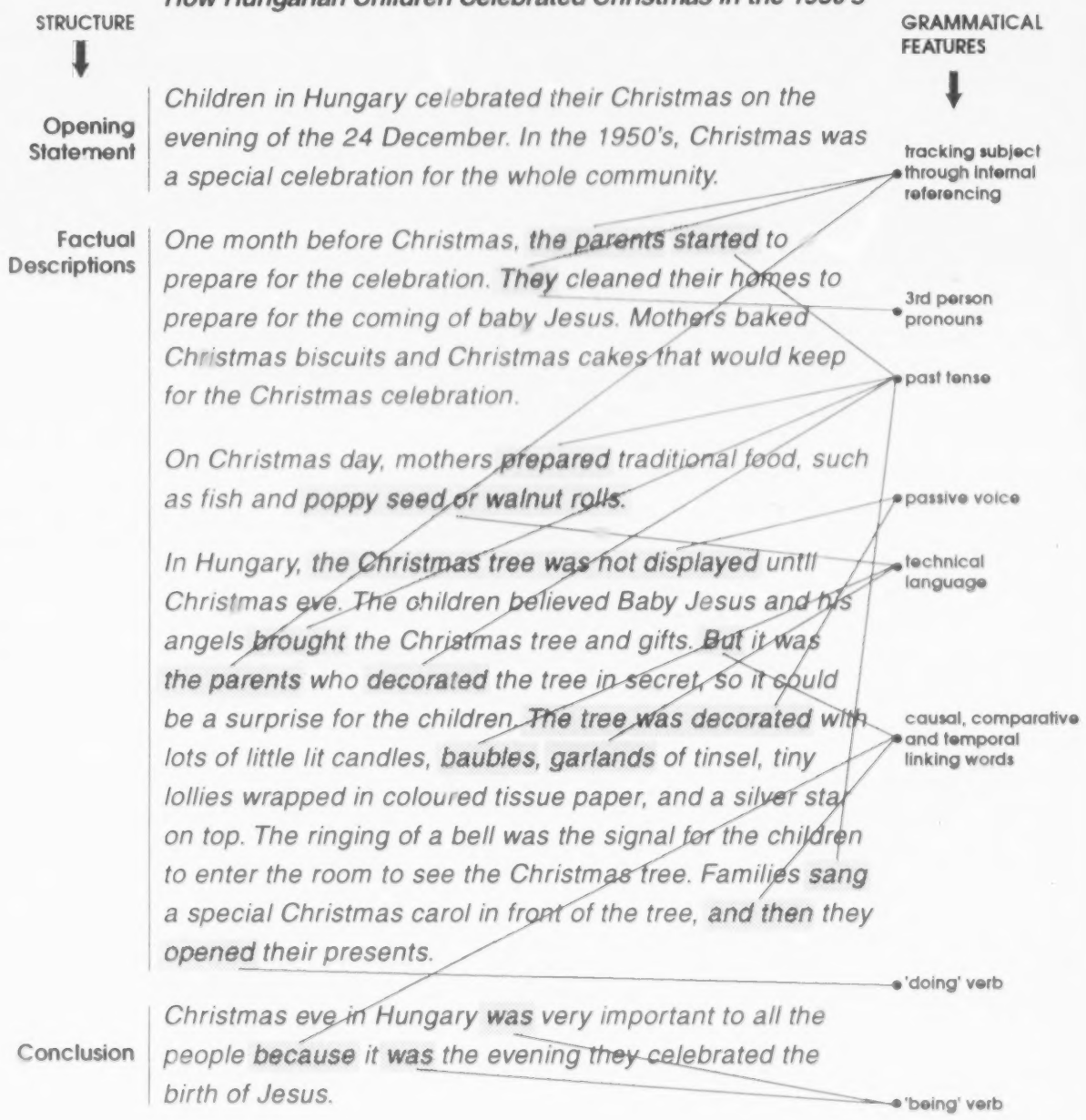
Together, the students and teacher examined the structure of the text and the purpose of each stage in that structure. Together they identified the grammatical features and language that were appropriate to an historical account positioned in the genre of a **report**.

Using an overhead projector, the teacher and students discussed and marked the three stages of the text. Then they discussed some of the grammatical features of the text separately, e.g. the reference to generic participants, temporal linking words, use of past tense and the third person pronoun.

(Refer to Chapter 3 for Tables listing possible grammatical features relevant to each genre.)

The edited report after it was analysed by students and teacher in terms of its structure and grammatical features:

How Hungarian Children Celebrated Christmas in the 1950's


STRUCTURE
GRAMMATICAL FEATURES
Opening Statement
Children in Hungary celebrated their Christmas on the evening of the 24 December. In the 1950's, Christmas was a special celebration for the whole community.
tracking subject through internal referencing
Factual Descriptions
One month before Christmas, the parents started to prepare for the celebration. They cleaned their homes to prepare for the coming of baby Jesus. Mothers baked Christmas biscuits and Christmas cakes that would keep for the Christmas celebration.
3rd person pronouns
past tense
On Christmas day, mothers prepared traditional food, such as fish and poppy seed or walnut rolls.
passive voice
In Hungary, the Christmas tree was not displayed until Christmas eve. The children believed Baby Jesus and his angels brought the Christmas tree and gifts. But it was the parents who decorated the tree in secret, so it could be a surprise for the children. The tree was decorated with lots of little lit candles, baubles, garlands of tinsel, tiny lollies wrapped in coloured tissue paper, and a silver star on top. The ringing of a bell was the signal for the children to enter the room to see the Christmas tree. Families sang a special Christmas carol in front of the tree, and then they opened their presents.
technical language
causal, comparative and temporal linking words
'doing' verb
Conclusion
Christmas eve in Hungary was very important to all the people because it was the evening they celebrated the birth of Jesus.
'being' verb

Information Source –
Zangalis, C. and Clarke, P., 1988, Christmas for Children, HODJA EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES COOPERATIVE LTD., Clifton Hill, Australia

Stage 5 Analyse Other Models

The teacher photocopied a few factual accounts of Christmas in other countries. In groups, the students examined these in terms of their structure, vocabulary and the grammar. These texts were compared to the text they had constructed as a class in Stage 3.

Stage 6 Support Students in their Construction of Texts

In groups of three, the students jointly constructed their reports.

Stage 7 Provide Explicit Feedback to Students

The COVER SHEET for WRITING on page 185 of *An Assessment Guide for Basic Education Programs in Victoria,* was used to systematically provide written feedback to the students. (See Appendix E.)

The teacher provided feedback to the students. This was done by making **general points to the whole class** and taking the opportunity to revise an aspect, e.g. the consistent use of the past tense in an historical report.

In some cases the teacher **discussed the writing with some of the small groups** of students who had worked together. The purpose of this may have been to clarify the use of pronouns or of linking words, or for suggesting other specific changes.

The teacher provided **written feedback** on forms that have been established for this purpose and are used with students participating in the CGE for Adults at Holmesglen College of TAFE.

Stage 8 Follow Up with Extension Activities

Oracy for Knowledge – Student Presentations

Students became particularly interested in how other families and cultures celebrated Christmas and were keen to share the knowledge they had gained while preparing and writing their reports. The students were given the opportunity to prepare and present a talk to a third of the class. The class divided into three groups with six students each. Each group had one student from each of the countries studied. Students used the Oracy sheets (see Appendix F) to assist them in their preparation and in receiving feedback from the teacher and/or other students about their talk.

Then students returned to Stage 1, to study the genre of recount in the Self-Expression Domain.

Stage 1 Build the Context

A visitor, who had experienced Christmas in Hungary as a child, was invited to the class. She was interviewed by the teacher and spoke about her personal childhood memories of Christmas in Hungary. The students were encouraged to ask questions and to compare this new information to the factual material they had already studied, in order to gain a different perspective and to explore particular personal details. Students were encouraged to take notes as they listened.

When the guest interview had finished, the teacher asked the students to help her write up the notes of the talk on the board in preparation for writing a recount of the guest speakers' Hungarian Christmas celebrations.

Note Taking – as modelled by the teacher on the board

Steps in Preparing for Christmas the Hungarian Way

One month before Christmas:

1. Cleaned the house.

The day before Christmas:

1. Prepared the special Christmas dinner, consisting of wine soup, crumbed fish, cucumber salad, potato and rice.

   Prepared poppy seed rolls for sweets.

On Christmas Day:

1. Decorated the tree with candles, sweets wrapped in silver foil and with an angel on the top.

   Decorated the tree in secret, while the children were in another room.
2. Had Christmas dinner at 6:00 p.m.
3. After dinner, rang the bell as a signal to the children to enter the room and see the decorated tree and the gifts.
4. Attended midnight mass with the family.
5. Sang Christmas carols at the church.
6. Returned home about 1:00 a.m.

Stage 2 Decide on the Purpose for the Text

The class decided that notes taken in Stage 1 reflected the parents' perspective in preparing for Christmas. The class decided to construct a personal recount of the guest speaker's childhood Christmas, reflecting her childhood perspective.

Stage 3 Model the Construction Process

The teacher worked with the class to organise the following stages in the structure of a recount:

1. orientation,
2. events, and
3. personal reflection or conclusion.

The teacher modelled the construction of a recount on the board, with input from the students.

Edited version of the redrafted recount constructed on the overhead -

Ildi's Childhood Christmas Celebrations

Ildi was born in Hungary thirty-eight years ago. As a child, she used to celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve.

About 6:00 p.m. on Christmas eve, Ildi and her family ate the traditional Hungarian Christmas meal of wine soup, crumbed fish, cucumber salad, potatoes and rice. For sweets, she ate a poppy seed roll or a walnut roll.

With excitement, she waited for the Christmas angel to bring the Christmas tree and the presents. When the Christmas angel rang the bell, she rushed into the room.

The Christmas tree towered above Ildi's head and stretched to reach the ceiling. The tree was decorated with sweets in silver paper, glittering baubles, lit candles, and an angel on the top. Her family gathered around the tree, sang a Christmas carol, and then opened their presents from the angel.

Ildi would sneak some of the sweets out of the paper, and then close the paper to pretend the sweets were still inside.

At midnight, her family went to the church for midnight mass. At the end of the service, she walked sleepily home in the gently falling snow.

Forty years later, half way around the world in Australia, Ildi's memories of her childhood Christmas celebrations in Hungary remain a special part of her life.

Stage 4 Analyse the Product

The recount as analysed by students and teacher in terms of its structure and grammatical features:

Ildi's Childhood Christmas Celebrations

Orientation

Ildi was born in Hungary thirty-eight years ago. As a child, she used to celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve.

Events sequenced chronologically

About 6:00 p.m. on Christmas eve, Ildi and her family ate the traditional Hungarian Christmas meal of wine soup, crumbed fish, cucumber salad, potatoes and rice. For sweets, she ate a poppy seed roll or a walnut roll.

With excitement, she waited for the Christmas angel to bring the Christmas tree and the presents. When the Christmas angel rang the bell, she rushed into the room.

The Christmas tree towered above Ildi's head and stretched to reach the ceiling. The tree was decorated with sweets in silver paper, glittering baubles, lit candles, and an angel on the top. Her family gathered around the tree, sang a Christmas carol, and then opened their presents from the angel.

Ildi would sneak some of the sweets out of the paper, and then close the paper to pretend the sweets were still inside.

At midnight, her family went to the church for midnight mass. At the end of the service, she walked sleepily home in the gently falling snow.

Conclusion

Forty years later, half way around the world in Australia, Ildi's memories of her childhood Christmas celebrations in Hungary remain a special part of her life.

specific participants

third person pronouns

past tense 'doing' words

temporal linking words

additive linking words

details to add interest

Stage 5 Analyse Other Models

This stage was skipped because students had previously worked with this genre.

Stage 6 Support Students in their Construction of Texts

In pairs, students interviewed each other to gain information and an appreciation of the other's childhood Christmas experiences.

There was one student, a Muslim woman, who had had no experience of Christmas as a child, but for whom a greater appreciation and understanding of the meaning and traditions of Christmas were most important. She was able to share her childhood memories of a particular festival (Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting) during the paired discussion.

Each student constructed a recount of how their partner (in the paired discussion) celebrated Christmas (or another special festival) when they were young.

Stage 7 Provide Explicit Feedback to Students

The students were encouraged to read their work to each other and to assist each other in suggesting improvements that could be made before handing it to the teacher for feedback. Students used 'Revising a First Draft – A Form for Students to Use' from page 202 from *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria*. (See Appendix D.)

The COVER SHEET for WRITING on page 185 of *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria*, was used to systematically provide written feedback to the students. (See Appendix E.)

Students had previously studied the argument genre within another topic. Now students and teacher returned to Stage 1, to set the context for writing another argumentive text in the Public Debate Domain

At the time of these particular classes on the theme of Christmas, one of the students brought along a newspaper article stating that Santa Claus should be banned in Holland until the first of December. This was used as a stimulus for a discussion of the commercialisation of Christmas today. Students were involved in class, group and paired discussions in which they were encouraged to express and give reasons for their opinion. Some students then wrote letters to the editor of their local paper stating these views and giving reasons to support their position.

This Christmas theme illustrated the use of all of the eight stages of the Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle. It is not always necessary to use all the stages of the cycle, when students are already familiar with the appropriate language and structure of the type of text required. However, it is always important to build the context and make it more familiar to all students.

Another example of an activity that uses some, but not all of the stages of the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle is outlined below.

Example Two - Mr Bean

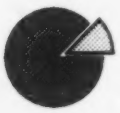
Objectives:

- To provide opportunities for students to enjoy a television comedy program together.
- To encourage students to retell the story to each other in sequence using the past tense.
- To provide a motivation and interest for students to construct their own recounts.

Stage 1 **Build the Context**

Students viewed an episode of the *Mr Bean* series of comedies. The teacher and students discussed and retold various aspects of the episode. This could be done as a whole class, small group or paired activity. Students related their own similar experiences to some of the events depicted in the program.

Stage 2 Decide on the Purpose for Writing



It was decided the proposed text would be their favourite aspect of the episode they had viewed. The domain in the CGE for Adults would be writing for Self Expression and the genre would be a narrative.

Stages 3-5 could be omitted because students were already familiar with the genre.

Stage 6 Support Students in their Construction of Texts

The teacher reviewed the students' past experience in constructing narratives by eliciting from the students some of the grammatical features they would need to consider in the construction of their narrative. These included third person pronouns and simple past tense. The importance of correctly sequencing the events in the recount was also stressed.

Students used 'Revising a First Draft – A Form for Students to Use' from page 202 from *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria* (Appendix D).

Stage 7 Provide Explicit Feedback to Students

The teacher provided feedback to the whole class about some general aspects of the task. The COVER SHEET for WRITING on page 185 of *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria,* was used to provide written feedback systematically to the students. (See Appendix E.)

Stage 8 Follow Up with Extension Activities

The students enjoyed this activity so much that it was decided by the students and the teacher that it should be followed up by viewing another episode of *Mr Bean*! After the first viewing, the video was stopped at various intervals for students to discuss what *Mr Bean* and other characters might have said.

Due to the almost total absence of speaking in most episodes, *Mr Bean* provides wonderful opportunities for class discussion of non-verbal behaviour and for enjoyment and appreciation which is not inhibited by the listening skills and comprehension of the learners. The authors would like to add that they have witnessed the most enthusiastic laughter from normally 'quiet' students during an episode of *Mr Bean*!

Further Use of the Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle

The Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle provides a framework for teachers in planning to meet the reading, writing and oral communication needs of all students. In working with LOTE background learners, teachers need to consider the particular cultural and language needs of these second language learners and adapt their practice accordingly. The following chapter provides suggested activities for use within each stage of the Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle.

Chapter 6

Activities for the Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle

Implementing the Adult Basic Education Teaching – Learning Cycle

This chapter firstly outlines what teachers should consider when planning to implement the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. Then it outlines a number of suggested activities to use within each of the eight stages of the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. For a complete description of each of the stages, please refer back to Chapter 5.

This comprehensive range of listings is intended to expand teachers' ways of dealing with these stages, while still giving teachers eight basic stages to frame their work. These eight stages represent a guided and supported approach, which should increase adult literacy students' repertoire of genres. Often, some of these stages will be skipped over, depending on the familiarity of the students to the topic, the genre and the tasks involved. On the other hand, frequently a stage will be revisited to increase students' exposure to these activities and increase their competence in them.

As in the learning-to-learn approach, teachers openly explain the rationale behind activities and how these activities fit into the overall ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle, so that students will come to understand the philosophy behind this cycle.

The activities listed in these stages are designed for LOTE background learners of the target group, but will generally also be useful for ESB learners. The teachers' awareness of specific LOTE background students' needs will effect the implementation of these activities. (Refer to Chapter 1 for Characteristics and Needs of LOTE background learners.)

Teacher's Role in Planning the Implementation of the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle

The teacher plans to:

- Negotiate a topic or theme with students – explore its importance and its purpose now, and in the future.
- Predict and negotiate what texts will be important to students.
- Think about which of the four domains to cover, and how these domains can be integrated:
  - Self-Expression
  - Practical Purposes
  - Knowledge
  - Public Debate
- Predict and negotiate which particular genres will emerge while studying this topic.
- Predict what applications of these genres will be relevant and valuable to students in their lives.
- Collect material to analyse and ask students to bring in material they find in the community and try to categorise it into one of the four Domains.
- Analyse texts for structure, vocabulary and language patterns and prepare for modelling the process of creating a text.
- Prepare to teach explicitly how to deconstruct texts and analyse textual structures in a meaningful context.
- Predict what metalanguage would be useful to students. LOTE background learners, with little formal education, may have no metalanguage in L1 to label linguistic features, therefore it is important not to introduce terminology too quickly.

- Plan and sequence integrated spoken and written language activities for the students.
- Draw students' attention to the differences between written and spoken language.
- Acknowledge that learning occurs through talk.
- Encourage approximations. Approximations reflect developmental stages of language acquisition and are insights into how students are developing internalised grammatical 'rules'.
- Give students many opportunities to practise and approximate; they will need to revisit linguistic structures already studied until they internalise these structures; students can only take in information when they are linguistically ready to take it in and the teacher must reach a balance between challenging students and overloading them.
- Predict and negotiate what follow-up activities could take place.

Stage 1 Build the Context to make the Topic Familiar

Teachers and students may jointly choose from the following:

- Use speech to explore a topic through oral activities and in this process also gauge the students' current knowledge of the subject area, and value their knowledge and life experiences relevant to the topic. Examples of oral activities:
  - Working in small groups, students share their background knowledge and experience in the chosen subject area, gained both in Australia and in their own countries. One person scribes what the group now knows about the topic, another scribes what they are not sure of, and another scribes what they would like to find out about the topic;
  - In pairs, interview each other, regarding familiarity of, and previous experiences with, the subject matter. Then one student scribes one or two sentences from the other student, together they edit their text, write it on butcher's paper and lastly read it to the class. (A form of the Language Experience Approach);
  - Students discuss their background knowledge and experience in small groups, with each group member having a designated role – e.g. one who organises turn-taking, one who summarises main points made, one who asks for alternative points of view, one who manages the time available, one who reports back to the large group; then the teacher summarises the main points reported by each group on the board (Oral Discussion Episode from the CGE for Adults); and/or
  - Brainstorm and/or draw mind maps to record the class's background knowledge.
- Explore how background knowledge and expectations are culturally and/or socially determined. This includes discussing cultural, gender, class and ethnic similarities and differences. If the topic has been explored in small groups, try whole class discussion at this time.
- Expand beyond the group's shared background knowledge on this topic by searching for more information and for a wider perspective from which to form opinions through watching videos, background reading and/or research at the library, phoning various organisations for information (Oral Service Episode), and so on.

Examples of activities:

- Plan dialogues, e.g. requests for more information or for appointments, bookings for a guest speaker or plans for an excursion and thus build up and recycle vocabulary relevant to the topic. Practise the dialogues and help students predict possible difficulties that might arise, or possible changes in context and plan for these contingencies; and/or
- Look at relevant pamphlets, brochures, newspaper articles, videos, songs and stories, to provide information from a variety of sources, using authentic materials.
- Listen to how texts sound. This is a way of first focusing on the meaning of the text gained through students' ability to listen and comprehend.
- Teacher reads to students or students listen to a tape recording. Focus on the meaning of the text by sequencing photos, drawings and/or statements taken from the text. Include poetry and songs.

- Use supported reading strategies with students while reading material chosen to expand students' background knowledge. These are ways to focus on meaning and increase reading speed while gaining background information.
  - Read visuals (headlines, diagrams and illustrations) to predict the content and vocabulary of the text and to draw on the students' prior knowledge of the topic;
  - Predict conversations which might take place between people in illustrations, and/or specific situations, based on their knowledge of similar events;
  - Read big books together, read the text while listening to a tape recording of it, read silently;
  - Read in small groups, each group recording any words or phrases that were difficult to either understand or pronounce, then small groups come together and share their lists; and /or
  - In small groups work on cloze exercises, in which group members discuss choices and reach a consensus on the best selection for each gap.

- Predict vocabulary common to this topic, extend students' known vocabulary, and list words or phrases specific to the topic. LOTE background learners will need to learn new words for known concepts, plus idioms and colloquialisms and vocabulary specific to a particular subject matter.
  - For beginner readers, teach functional social sight words, emergency words, form-filling words, and the Dolch list of one hundred most commonly used words;
  - Brainstorm in groups to extend vocabulary;

- Put a main content word on the board, ask students to list words they associate with it, categorise these words into groups and label these groups (small group activity);
- Substitute synonyms to expand vocabulary. Using a text the students have already read, teachers list synonyms for words in the text, and students scan the text to find matching words;
- Students are given two or three word sentences. In small groups, they take turns expanding the sentences by adding more information. Students compare the sentences in terms of meaning and grammatical structure;
- After listening to a tape of a dialogue dealing with the given topic, students make lists of particular categories of words, e.g. ones that showed action, ones that indicated feelings, ones that designated a time reference, ones that were descriptive, and ones that were used as connectives.

• Use visual stimulus (photos, objects, models, diagrams, time-lines, charts, newspapers, timetables, calendars, maps, tickets, bills, labels) to build the context.

- Read visual material in preparation for reading a text;
- Logically sequence photos or drawings, question how else they could be sequenced and then match the sequenced photos and given captions, re-sequence if necessary;
- Read Street Directory – one student orally gives directions, while others trace the path on a street directory, an activity used to set the context and practise the language used in oral directions; and/or
- Read maps – in pairs, students locate addresses of characters from the reading, public buildings, or places of interest, and plan routes and public transport to get to chosen locations from the classroom.

"The way we read an image is determined by cultural rules of perspective, abstraction and directionality." (Kress 1990). Teachers cannot assume that graphics are easily read. Labelled diagrams, graphs, tables, maps, timetables and flow charts cannot be assumed to be constructed in the same way as in our culture, therefore the skills to read graphic material may need to taught to LOTE background learners.

• Use communicative small group activities, such as games or role plays designed to enable students to share, discuss and argue about aspects of the topic and thus build the context of the topic.

- In small groups, each student is given one sentence of a text relevant to the topic, they read the sentences, order the sentences, practise reading the sentences and lastly stand in order and read the text to the other groups.

- Use activities (excursions, discovery routes to follow, hands-on activities, demonstrations, guest speakers) to further build the context.

  It is important to get LOTE background learners out into the community, to extend their experiences beyond contexts which are familiar and comfortable while in a supportive environment.

Stage 2 Decide on the Purpose for Writing

Teachers and students may jointly choose from the following:

- Use a range of written texts related to the topic (use materials from Stage 1) brochures, posters, newsletters, reports, narratives, letters to the editor, personal letters, exerts from encyclopaedias, phone books, maps, menus and/or cartoons to provide exposure to a variety of formats of authentic materials.
  - Through group discussion, group these materials into categories based on the similarities and differences in the purpose, tone and structure of each text; and/or
  - Gauge how familiar students are with the format of these genres.
- Through negotiation, decide on the social purpose, the intended audience and the level of formality (tone) of the proposed text; and any social/cultural restraints (where and when this genre is normally used and who normally uses it).
- Select the most appropriate domain of the CGE for Adults and then identify the most appropriate genre to write in.
- Exchange students' experiences in similar genres, including their personal anecdotes.

LOTE background learners' unfamiliarity with the dominant genres in the Australian context, will mean more explicit teaching will need to be done in Stages 3-5.

Do the students have sufficient background knowledge, experience and familiarity with texts to contribute to the modelling of a relevant genre model in Stage 3?

Stage 3 Model the Construction Process

Teachers and students may jointly choose from the following:

To begin, model the construction of texts which are more familiar, shorter, more context dependent, and which have a limited number of different linguistic features.

- Identify the main stages of the proposed text. If it is a genre new to the students, the stages can be limited to introduction, body and conclusion and when analysing the completed text, students can scrutinise these stages in more detail.

- Identify the main stated and implied idea/s to include in the text. Identify evidence and/or examples to support main ideas.

- Students verbally construct a text, and through discussion with the teacher, they orally edit it while the teacher writes it on an overhead. This method illustrates the movement from the students' spoken word to the teacher's written text, and is an adaptation of the Language Experience Approach, where the semantic and syntactic content of the text comes from the students.

- The teacher incorporates suggestions from the students, as he/she models the drafting and editing process on the board and produces a text which students can use as a model.

- Students listen to an interview or a dialogue explaining how to do something (procedure) or explaining some factual information (report), either in real time or tape recorded. Then students and teachers jointly draft a written report or a written procedure from the oral information. Students and teachers then compare the characteristics of the taped oral language and the written text.

  Teachers should explicitly point out the differences between spoken and written texts. This is especially helpful for LOTE background learners. These students will need even more help in making the transition to written texts, because their spoken language may be a stabilised non-standard variety of English.

Stage 4 Analyse the Product of Stage 3

Students are given copies of the model produced in Stage 3.

Teachers and students can jointly choose from the following:

- Students locate key words and phrases in the text, plus any technical words specific to the field.
  - Students suggest alternatives to the key words, and then decide if these synonyms have changed the meanings. This encourages use of a thesaurus; and/or
  - For LOTE background learners literate in L1, use bilingual dictionaries as an effective means of expanding their English vocabulary through translation.
- Analyse the schematic structure of the text, by using some of the following techniques.
  - Label the stages in a text;
  - Cut up the text into the stages, sequence the stages of the text; and/or
  - Consider whether this is the best way to sequence these stages.
- Identify the level of formality, the sequence of ideas, the cohesion of the text and the linguistic features of the text by collaboratively working in small groups to complete exercises which focus on specific language features. Students have already helped construct the text, so they are familiar with the text and are now focussing on relevant grammatical features in a familiar context.
  - Use cloze exercises which focus on only one linguistic feature at a time – e.g. eliminate prepositions, linking words, verbs in past time, action verbs, modal verbs, or specific participants;
  - Use cloze to eliminate a variety of structures and ask the students to identify the type of missing word based on its position in the sentence and its modifiers;
  - Focus on simple past tense verbs in a recount, and look at regular and irregular past tense forms;
  - Analyse ways of expressing future time in a text describing future intentions;
  - Highlight on an overhead transparency, all words referring to one character in one colour, highlight all reference words to a particular place in another colour;
  - Highlight all imperative verbs in a procedural text;
  - Highlight persuasive language and modal verbs in an argument or discussion;

  - Match first half of sentence to second half (teacher would have written out sentences and cut them up, so students could practise noun-verb agreement);
  - When looking at a narrative, rewrite the text from the perspective of a different character; and/or
  - For literate LOTE background learners who would be aware of the grammatical construction of their own language, a comparison between English constructions and the grammar of their first language can be helpful. If the comparisons are not too complex, these comparisons and contrasts could be shared with the whole class to increase the class' general interest in language features.

- Use spoken dialogue in the classroom to clarify, elaborate and comment on a written text by developing effective questioning techniques or other methods of inquiry.
  - Use verbal and mental process words for talking about texts –

    e.g. assert, hint, affirm, argue, describe, define, explain, concede, confirm, conclude, doubt, imply, report, predict, assume, interpret, hypothesise, remember, compare, contrast, infer, analyse, criticise, deny, believe, discover, understand, theorise, see from a different point of view, solve problems.

- Reflect on effectiveness of this text. (This is part of the performance criteria in the Reading Elements of the CGE for Adults, under 'Critique'.)
  - Identify and explain strengths and weaknesses of the text; and/or
  - Identify any missing or misleading information.

- Reflect on use and importance of this genre in contemporary Australian society.

Stage 5 Read and Analyse Other Models

Teachers and students can jointly choose from the following:

- Select examples of the genre to use as models, appropriate to the level of the class; students are encouraged to bring in texts they have found in newspapers or other sources.
- Develop reading strategies appropriate to the texts – predicting, skimming, scanning, identifying a logo, identifying headings, layout, and so on.
  - Read a job description from an advertisement and then predict the job and salary; and/or
  - Read an article about some aspect of the topic being studied and then supply the title or headline.
- Check students' comprehension of these written models. Students
  - Retell the written text in their own words and thus translate written patterns of language into more familiar spoken patterns of language;
  - Identify main points, subordinate idea/s, subtle or assumed meanings;
  - Take notes from the text to use when later constructing a text;
  - Act out or demonstrate the text; and/or
  - Link happenings in the reading material to their own prior knowledge and/or personal experiences. Predict how someone with a different perspective might view the text.
- Detect and analyse points of view in the text, both stated and implied.
- Compare and contrast points of view expressed in the text with personal points of view.
- Speed copy model texts – students copy a model text as quickly as possible for twenty minutes a day for a week, they check for mistakes and try to increase both their speed and accuracy. This practice of speed copying models already analysed in class, encourages reading in chunks, increases an awareness of text structure, punctuation, spelling and grammatical structures.
- Review knowledge and basic concept relations of that topic (from Stage 1) and relate that information to the model being deconstructed.

- Gather additional information about the topic outside class. Students
  - Collect pamphlets or newspaper clippings;
  - Ask face-to-face questions and make phone inquires (Oral Service Episodes);
  - Conduct interviews with 'experts' in the area (Oral Service Episodes);
  - Use the library and use research skills; and/or
  - Use a variety of reference materials.
- Analyse the texts read. (Refer back to Stage 4 for more details.)
  - Students locate key words and phrases in the text, plus any technical words specific to the field;
  - Analyse the schematic structure of the text;
  - Detect the level of formality, the sequence of ideas, the cohesion of the text and the linguistic features of the text;
  - Give students the cut up individual stages of a model text, but eliminate the conjunctives between the stages; students order the stages of the text and then supply their own conjunctives;
  - Identify and explain any strengths and weaknesses of the text and identify any missing or misleading information;
  - Teach students metalanguage appropriate to their level, with which to discuss, compare and analyse texts; and/or
  - Teachers guide students in recognising grammatical features of a text e.g. If the text is a recount, highlight the verbs within the text which are in the past tense, both irregular and regular. Many irregular past tense constructions are commonly used and more easily distinguished as past tense constructions than regular -ed endings by students when they are listening to a text. Often -ed endings are glossed over or joined to the next word, e.g. *He play(ed) tennis. She walk(ed) to the milk bar.*
- For more advanced students – Teachers and students look at the range of texts which they categorised in Stage 2, and they discuss texts which do not follow the conventional guidelines of commonly used genres of our society. (For example, an oath of allegiance is structured as a procedural text, but its purpose is to persuade its readers.)

Are students ready to move on to Stage 6 where they produce their own texts in a supported and guided environment?

Stage 6 Support and Guide Students in their Construction of Texts

Teachers and students can jointly choose from the following:

- Work in small groups to promote cooperative and collaborative learning; encourage group learning and help the students to acknowledge that learning occurs through talk.
  - Beginner readers may copy the text produced in Stage 3;
  - Reconstruct short texts in a Dictogloss activity. (There is an explanation of Dictogloss on page 56);
  - Organise the proposed text in a mind map as preparation for writing the text;
  - Build up vocabulary relevant to the subject matter and tone;
  - Discuss the relationship between the writer and the reader; and/or
  - Bring together first the schematic structure of the proposed text (its beginning, middle and end), and then the grammatical features.
- Review knowledge of the topic from Stage 1.
- Refer back to the demonstration of the drafting, revising and editing process in Stage 3.
  - In small groups set the context and select the genre, then have different students draft different stages of the text, then join them together; and/or
  - Write the introduction and conclusion as a whole class with the teacher scribing on the over head projector. Then small groups of students write the body of the text and later the class compares the resulting texts.
- Encourage approximations. Learners will control some aspects of the language before others. At times it will be appropriate to learn control of only a number of limited aspects of text construction.
- Encourage students to seek assistance in a variety of ways when revising and editing a text.
  - Read aloud to a friend or colleague;
  - Check spelling in a dictionary or a computer spell-check; and/or
  - Use a thesaurus.
- Use metalanguage developed in Stages 4 and 5 to describe and discuss students' written texts.

  This would include the categories for the performance criteria in the Reading and Writing Modules of the CGE for Adults. (Refer back to pages 34-39.)

Are the students ready for independent writing of the genre?

If '**yes**', students will:

- Independently construct the genre for a specific purpose and audience.
- Apply knowledge and skills learnt in the guided construction.
- Conference and consult over first draft with other students or teacher.
- Draft and edit work to produce a finished product.
- Adapt and transfer the genre studied to similar contexts outside the classroom.
- Predict other applications of this genre and research these other applications.
- Theorise on the development of this genre in this society, and its future use.

If '**no**', students and teachers will go back to modelling the process of constructing a text.

Stage 7 Provide Explicit Feedback to Students

Students will:

- Complete 'Revising a First Draft – A Form for Students to Use' from page 202 in *An Assessment Guide for Adult Basic Education Programs in Victoria* prior to submitting a writing assessment task. This form is not intended for Level One students. (See Appendix D on page 128.)
- Keep their work in folios and complete any necessary record-keeping forms.
- Read their work out loud in small groups and check understanding with the other students, ask for suggested improvements in their work and follow through on any agreed suggestions.
- Keep a reflective journal on each unit of work, citing which activities taught them the most, how the unit could be improved, and what they had learned from doing it.
- Keep personal spelling lists, and increase their spelling proficiency by using the various methods including LOOK / COVER / SAY / WRITE / CHECK.

Teachers can choose from the following:

- Write comments on a cover sheet for each reading, writing or oracy task to be assessed and link comments to an explanation of the CGE for Adults' competencies interpreted for students.
- Analyse students' **written** work in order to focus future language lessons on areas that need further work.
  - Use a technique which encourages students to take increasing responsibility for their own corrections. For example, use a correction code (Learmonth, P., 1994:25) on first submitted drafts to give feedback to students. (See Appendix J on page 134);
  - Focus on only a few items at a time to avoid confusion and because many students in the target group may have difficulty transferring items from their short term to their long term memory;
  - Choose to focus on grammatical items which interfere with meaning, that are recurring, and that are not too difficult for the students to learn at their particular stage of development. (For example, ask students to highlight all linking words in both reading material and in their writing or all past tense verbs); and/or

  - Refer individuals or small groups of students to self-access grammar programs for extended practice on a feature which is relevant to that student but not the whole group. (See Teacher Resources for listings of recommended self-access material.)

- Analyse students' **spoken** words in order to focus future language lessons on areas that need further work.
  - Teachers should respond to what the students say rather than what the teacher thought the students meant to say. Deliberate responses to what is actually said will direct students to more precise ways of expressing themselves and help them avoid ambiguities;
  - Teachers should focus on meaning and appropriateness rather than grammatical accuracy; this means focusing on errors which interfere with meaning (global errors). For example, misunderstandings may arise from incorrect word order in a sentence or inappropriate choice of vocabulary; and/or
  - Teachers discuss alternative ways to more effectively express ideas.

Stage 8 Follow Up with Extension Activities

Students will utilise the expertise they have gained in the previous Stages, and implement some follow up activity. Some possible examples are:

- Give oral presentations, debates, or demonstrations in front of an audience (Oracy Models of CGEA).
- Send letters to newspapers, companies, government agencies, etc.
- Organise a book of student writing on a particular topic.
- Write a play based on the topic and perform it.
- Organise a student reading of their published works.
- Organise and deliver planned presentations.
- Design,write and display posters to advertise a play, or student books for sale, etc.
- Organise a multicultural open day, where students will demonstrate activities to small groups of interested people. (Some suggested cultural activities are culinary, musical, craft, explanations of artifacts or photos.)

Concluding comments about the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle for LOTE background ABE students

An outcome of using the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle is that students understand the purpose of individual learning activities, the connections between activities and the sequencing of these activities. These students are able to grasp hold of and make use of learning situations wherever they arise with increasing confidence, and thus become more independent learners.

The order in which these stages are listed represents the most supported and guided pathway. The order the teacher chooses to teach these stages will depend on the level of language skills, the level of independence, and experience of the students. Students may move back and forth between Stages. If students demonstrate some difficulty with independently constructing a text, the teacher can go back and model the text again.

Progress for these students is often slow in terms of increasing language accuracy. Within a supportive class environment, real progress for these students can develop in terms of their confidence to "give it a go" and become involved in activities both in the classroom and in the wider community, their increased repertoire of written and spoken discourses, their willingness to express their opinions, their opportunities and desire to further their learning through utilising their developing literacy skills and a chance to stretch themselves intellectually.

An Explanation of Dictogloss within the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle

"Dictogloss" can be used to model a genre. Students jointly reconstruct a text and then later go back to analyse the model text. The steps used in Dictogloss span a few stages of the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. These steps are:

The teacher gives the students a topic; students discuss their prior knowledge of this topic in small groups, and predict and then list vocabulary relevant to this topic, (Setting the Context);

The teacher reads a completed model text to the students;

The students, in small groups, jointly reconstruct the text that the teacher has read, usually on a plastic sheet for an overhead projector;

The teacher and students analyse the texts that each group of students has written and give each group explicit feedback. The students compare their texts to the model text which the teacher has read; and then

The students and teacher analyse the purpose, tone, structure and grammatical features of the original model text.

Resources for LOTE background learners in ABE programs

This chapter has given an overview of types of activities which may be used to implement the ABE Teaching – Learning Cycle. The purpose of this chapter is not to produce materials to use with students, but to alert teachers to the types of activities which are appropriate for the target group and to recommend to teachers available published teaching materials. In addition, see Further Reading and Teacher Resources.

In Victoria, recently published teaching materials have been specifically produced to use with the CGE for Adults and its accompanying Assessment Guide. These materials are well suited to meet the language and literacy needs of the learners from the target group of this publication.

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– Faine, M., Smith, B. and Tinney, L. (editors), Units 1 and 2, 1993, Units 3 and 4, 1994. *A Time to Learn*, published by ACFE Board, Melbourne, Victoria,

– Goulborn, B. and Manton S., 1995. *Talking Curriculum: A Practitioner's Guide to the CGE for Adults Oral Communication Stream*, ACFE Board, Melbourne, Victoria.

– Learmonth, P., 1994. *Men and Women – Roles and Relationships*, AMES publication, Melbourne, Victoria (more titles are to be published in 1995).

– Lorey, B., Stricker, R. and Kiernan, H., 1994. *If I Only Had Time*, Curriculum Planning Project, Eastern Regional Council of ACFE.

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– Pabego, D., (ed.) *The World Times*, VALBEC and Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, (a newspaper format covering international issues, five isues per year), Melbourne, Victoria.

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Chapter 7

The Learning Environment

Second language acquisition research

Stephen Krashen (1982) proposed a distinction between acquisition – the process by which children unconsciously acquire their native language – and learning, which is the conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. He points out that children 'learn' language automatically – they learn without explicit teaching, without inhibition, driven by a need to communicate. For LOTE background students the need to communicate and use language is the best motivation for learning.

Second language acquisition research has stressed the importance of developing an 'enabling linguistic environment' – a **stress-free atmosphere** with many opportunities for students to practise and learn the language through **meaningful and relevant activities**. So far in this publication we have focussed on the explicit teaching of language skills. Language is also acquired or 'picked up' to some degree, depending on the learning environment created by the teacher and the input received by the learner. This chapter looks at suggestions for creating a supportive learning environment. Such an environment encourages:

- activities which are structured towards success and in which emphasis is on what is achieved;

- students to take risks and make mistakes in speaking and writing, as these are viewed as opportunities to learn, rather than failure to achieve;
- the process of learning to be seen to be as equally important as the product;
- students to cooperate and support each other rather than to compete; and
- recognition of students' individual interests and abilities.

Suggestions for teachers in creating a supportive learning environment

- Be aware of the cultural differences which can relate to communication differences both verbal and nonverbal, learning styles and different educational experiences. (See Chapter 2 for more detail.)
- Ensure that the learning environment is one in which students feel supported; that they can take risks, make mistakes and learn from these.
- Provide the learners with plenty of non-verbal information to accompany that provided through language.
- Write clearly on the board as well as giving instructions orally. Don't talk to the board.
- Be aware that students may find it difficult to use many skills simultaneously, eg watch and listen to a video program like BTN (Behind the News: ABC) and take notes at the same time.
- Assist students to use their existing knowledge about the world – in learning English and in learning other subjects (e.g. science or numeracy) **through** English.
- Explain the reason and relevance for what students are studying, e.g. how and why to read and write for public debate. Encourage them to contribute and compare what they do in class with their own cultural background and experience.
- Provide many opportunities for the students to speak in situations where there is a genuine need to communicate.
- Provide the students with opportunities to talk about how English works.
- Explain the Australian learning style of questioning, critical thinking, writing argumentatively and participating in class.

Learning a language, whether it be the first or a subsequent language, involves three interrelated kinds of learning:

- Learning **a** language – initially listening and speaking, leading to reading and writing;
- Learning **through** language – using language to learn other things; and
- Learning **about** language – how it works and how it can be used in a variety of functions.

Second language learning is similar to learning the first language in that it is learned:

- through use;
- through exposure;
- through need; and
- through experimentation.

Learning a second or subsequent language is different from learning one's first language. L2 learners are older and have had the experience of learning their first language as well as many varied life experiences. They are in a situation that is very different from that of a young child learning 'automatically' in a supportive family environment where feedback is immediate and encouraging.

Some students may have a very limited view of what learning entails. They may:

- **see learning from a book as the only form of learning;**
- **not value group work; and**
- **see no point in communicative activities.**

Principles of Language Learning

A study of learner preferences (Willing, 1988) found that there was little correlation between learning preferences within particular biographical groups. These biographical variables included ethnicity, education, age and type of learning experience. The research indicated that we cannot generalise, e.g. 'Asian students prefer X' or that 'younger learners like to Y'. It seems that within any group of LOTE background students, learning styles will vary.

Students will naturally use a variety of learning strategies. They may need assistance to explore new strategies that may better suit their own particular needs and enable them to learn more effectively. By encouraging students to develop their own learning-to-learn strategies, they can take greater responsibility for their own learning and thus become independent learners.

In describing cultural differences, it is important to stress that there is no typical student from a particular background.

Throughout this publication the authors have stressed that teachers be aware of and cater for the language and cultural needs of the students from the target group. McKay & Scarino, (1991, 28 -30) suggest there are eight principles of language learning that should be realised in the learning environment of LOTE background students.

These are that **learners learn language best** when:

- they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests;
- they are provided with opportunities to participate in the communicative use of the target language in a wide range of activities;
- they are exposed to communicative data which is comprehensible, and relevant to their own needs, interests and frames of reference;
- they focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, strategies and aspects of knowledge in order to support the process of language acquisition and the learning of concepts;
- they are exposed to sociocultural information and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language;
- they become aware of the role and nature of the language and the culture;

- they are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress; and
- they are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning.

The GCE for Adults provides opportunities for students to develop their own learning-to-learn strategies. The General Curriculum Options (GCO), in particular, encourage students to develop and use initiative and independent learning strategies. The GCO requires students to collect, analyse and organise information; plan and organise activities; and work with others in teams.

Learners should be encouraged to take a growing responsibility for the management of their own learning, so that they learn how to learn, and how to learn a language.
(Scarino et al. 1988a :30)

Communicative Activities

In adult basic education programs there are many opportunities for students to learn language by actively using it in collaborative communicative activities such as group work, problem solving tasks, role plays and simulations. Small group activities can provide the opportunity for students to interact for real purposes and encourage the development of oracy skills. These activities are often called 'communicative activities' as they support the development of communication skills. The disadvantages of whole class discussions and the advantages of small group work with LOTE background learners are outlined below.

Disadvantages of whole class discussions for LOTE background learners:

- There is little opportunity for 'real' interaction and language practice. There are only two ways to take part in a discussion:
  - teacher initiates student involvement (stressful); or
  - the student volunteers an answer (many students in the target group do not).
- Utterances need to be formed quickly. LOTE background learners may need more time to understand and respond.
- LOTE background students may not feel confident in asking for clarification because this holds up the discussion.

Advantages of group work with LOTE background students:

- There is greater opportunity to talk.
- There is opportunity to practise opening, developing and terminating conversations.
- The use of turn-taking rules is required.
- There is greater opportunity to experience support and to support the language learning of others.
- There is more time to listen, check understanding and respond.
- Communication is more natural and students do not feel 'on show'. The language learning possibilities are increased because language is for real communication.
- It is less threatening. If a mistake is made in structure, vocabulary or in understanding the content, the audience is small.
- Students can 'experiment' with new language structures and vocabulary as the atmosphere is less daunting.
- A greater variety of language is heard and used – (both social and academic English) and students feel more confident to have a go.
- The focus of the group tends to be on solving a problem or developing an argument, rather than coming up with a 'correct' answer.
- All students are more actively involved in small group discussion than in whole class discussions, particularly when the task has been set and each person has a role to perform.

By establishing roles within a group:

- responsibility for the group is shared;
- students who are particularly confident do not dominate;
- different styles of speaking are required;
- organisation of the group is made easier; and
- individual goals as well as group goals are clear.

Some cooperative group-activity roles:

leader – initiates the discussion and keeps group on task;

scribe (recorder) – takes notes of the main ideas;

encourager – encourages and includes everyone;

checker – checks that the group understands; and

summariser – retells and concludes main ideas, referring to the scribe's notes.

Many students, both L1 and L2 alike, may find these roles confusing at first. To aid the students' understanding of particular roles such as these, the class could observe a group discussion in which some students take on selected roles. After the discussion, the teacher and students could talk about who in the group had taken on what roles, and what the 'observers' had noticed about the roles of each participant.

Classroom activities should involve learners in using language for comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting while the emphasis of the activity is on meaning rather than form. In communicative activities learners are involved in the purposeful and active use of language to meet the needs of a given communicative situation. Some communicative activities that involve group, pair and classwork include:

Problem solving activities:

These activities require students to solve a problem by coming to a consensus. Students need to use language which allows them to make suggestions; give reasons for their viewpoint; and to modify, accept or reject the ideas of others in the group. The topic or problem to be solved would be in the context of the theme being studied and may involve discussion of the importance of a particular related statement or by sharing opinions of a newspaper article.

Information gap activities:

- **One-way task:**

  In this kind of activity one student, (Student A) has a complete set of information which the other student (Student B) requires to complete a task. Student B can obtain this information by asking appropriate questions and Student A can assist by providing the relevant information.

- **Two-way task:**

  Each student in a group or pair holds part of the information required to complete a task. Students share the information they have so they can complete the task together. This type of activity allows for interactive language use as the students are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification of the information provided.

There are many very good books that provide a variety of communicative activities for paired and group work. These include:

Hamilton, J., & Cumming, M., 1985, *Take Your Partners: Pictorial Pairwork Exercises*, Macmillan Education.

Watcyn-Jones, Peter, 1984, *Pair Work One – Student A* and *Pair Work One – Student B*, Penguin Functional English.

Yorkey, R., 1985, *Talk-A-tivities: Problem Solving and Puzzles for Pairs*, Addison Wesley. NY.

Role plays

In order to practise the language required for particular situations learners can also participate in simulated activities or role-plays. These could include the learner in simulated roles of a shopkeeper, a customer, a waiter or a teacher; and in simulated contexts such as a supermarket, a restaurant or speaking on the phone; and for simulated purposes such as to buy food or to attend an interview.

Pronunciation

The communicative activities all involve a choice of language which is generally unpredictable. For many students, becoming proficient in their pronunciation is a high priority. They may request pronunciation lessons and there are many suggested drills to improve pronunciation. However, the effect of these drills is questionable. For students who are particularly concerned about pronunciation, there are a variety of resource books with accompanying tapes available that students can use individually out of class times. One of these which emphasises the importance of developing stress and rhythm to increase the intelligebility and enhance the communicative effectiveness of learners spoken English is *In Tempo – An English Pronunciation Course* by Halina Zawadzki, 1994, NCELTR, Macquarie University, Sydney.

> "We cannot communicate face-to-face unless two types of skills are developed in tandem. Rehearsed production is useless if we are unable to respond to the reply that is generated from our interlocutor (ie the person we are trying to talk to)."
>
> (Anderson & Lynch, 1988:3-4)

The opportunity to talk in preparation for writing tasks is important for all students but particularly for LOTE background students. Through the talking and discussion process, the students can clarify their understanding of both the task and the content, try out and develop ideas, experiment with their use of language and receive feedback on their effectiveness. All language teaching involves the four macro skills in an integrated approach. It is important for teachers to assist LOTE background learners to listen more effectively.

Learning-how-to-learn listening strategies

Teachers can encourage and provide opportunities for students to:

- listen for a particular purpose;
- listen for gist; and
- listen for particular features or points.

Audio tapes provide the opportunity to stop the flow and/or listen a number of times for different features such as the main content words, the rise and fall of the voice or answers to particular questions. Teachers may tape authentic conversations, students may tape their own conversations and teachers may also record dialogues or monologues they have prepared to teach a particular aspect of language. This could include a particular text type, e.g. the reading of a news broadcast, a narrative or an instruction; information on a particular topic or theme that emphasises a certain grammatical feature; or a dialogue between two people.

Some resources that may be useful include:

Hynes M. & Baichman, M., 1989, *Breaking the Ice*, Longman.

Apple, Raig & Lapsley, A., 1991, *Access Australia*, International Communication Pty Ltd, Victoria, (textbook, answerbook, cassettes).

In regard to listening and reading, teachers should not equate understanding with the ability to reproduce.

Considerations in regard to reading

- It is important to observe students' reading in order to determine good reading strategies: skimming and scanning and familiarity with text itself. By listening to a student read, a teacher gains an insight into the student's use of phonics as well as his/her stress and pitch. The miscues made may indicate how well the student is processing the written language and comprehending what is read. A student may read, *he went to home*, for *he went home*, which would not cause him to lose meaning and which may indicate familiarity with the sentence structure *he went to* ___. In contrast, if the student read *he went horse*, this could suggest a lack of comprehension of the meaning of the text or difficulty in knowing the syntactic category.

- Teachers need to be aware of not presenting reading material that uses vocabulary requiring particular cultural understanding or specific knowledge. Very often it can be incorrectly assumed that a learner from the target group has certain specific reading needs or problems when it may be more to do with some unfamiliar vocabulary or the student not having the relevant prior knowledge.

- It is important to note, that beginning readers of English who are good readers in their first language are unable to apply those reading strategies until they have reached a certain level in their language proficiency.

Considerations in regard to writing

- Some LOTE background learners may be used to an entirely different writing system and/or may be used to reading from right to left. These students, who are not used to the print and script used in English and other European languages, will need assistance in learning this. They may need instruction, similar to that employed by primary school teachers, in the most efficient way to form the upper and lower case letters. The use of word processors provides the opportunity to produce a piece of work that is visually satisfying while the student is still learning handwriting skills.

- Some learners may have been used to organising their material differently for compositions in their first language and may be unfamiliar with presenting an argument in a linear way. As a result their writing may reveal problems of organisation as well as syntactic errors. In addition they may have different views regarding plagiarism. Some LOTE background learners believe in the author's authority and that the author can best present the arguments. (For a more detailed account of the cultural differences in regard to this see Chapter 2.)

Considerations in setting assessment tasks for the CGE for Adults

Teachers need to be aware of the following:

- As the CGE for Adults is an accredited certificate, all students need information on the rules, procedures, expectations and assessment requirements. Learners in the target group often need more explicit guidelines.
- The learner's expectation of the class may differ from what actually happens:
  - Many would expect to have exams and to be able to rote learn all they need to know.
  - In contrast to this attitude, others, whose culture values group support see no need to prove themselves individually and may find the notion of individual assessment tasks quite unecessary.
  - Many LOTE background students have difficulties understanding the culturally-specific emphases on personal growth and exploration of personal identity. Many cultures do not encourage self-insight writing as in personal journals but instead encourage group oriented writing that focuses on group or national achievement. (Leki, 1992, cited in Davison et al, 1995.)
- As is the case for all students participating in the CGE for Adults, LOTE background students will need to have the guidelines explained thoroughly, so that they fully comprehend the on-going nature of assessment. (Student cover sheets that provide for meaningful feedback from the teacher are to be found in Appendix E.)
- Ambiguity can occur when setting assessment task questions. Key words such as *define, discuss, explain* and *describe* call for a particular type of genre and schematic structure. It is important that students understand exactly what is required of them in assessment tasks.
- In some cultures it is inappropriate to guess, whereas estimation is a requirement of the Numeracy Stream.
- Problem solving tasks may be unfamiliar. LOTE background students may need explicit instruction. The teacher may need to explain this type of activity by demonstrating the stages in solving the problem, emphasising the process and the outcome.
- There are cultural differences in the way people write. For example, the linear model is favoured in Australia and other Anglo Saxon cultures. In some other cultures a circular model is more acceptable and many students would be more accustomed to this. (Refer to Chapter 3.)
- Lateral thinking and creativity may not have been encouraged in some students' first culture.

Considerations in regard to feedback and correction

As well as written individual feedback, discussion with the students is very important.

- LOTE background learners should feel supported to experiment with English and to know they will be given assistance when it is necessary. In the initial stages what the student is trying to say is more important than the way it is said.

- In correcting student writing, it is better to focus on a couple of types of errors at any one time. Students may want everything corrected at once and they need to understand why it is more beneficial to deal with one or two specific aspects at one time, e.g. how to refer to future time.

- Written feedback to students needs to be both positive and specific. It needs to note what the student can already do and provide clear suggestions for how the students can improve their writing. This task for teachers is made simpler if teachers and students are aware of the language and structure that is required by the particular task that is set. (Refer to the Tables for the four domains of the CGE for Adults in Chapter 4.) Some teachers like to use a correction code (see Appendix J) so that students can self correct. Very often, for literacy students who have many errors in their written work, it is more useful to focus on one or two mistakes as mentioned above.

- Give immediate feedback to students by modelling correct language throughout a conversation in response to an error. This is often referred to as echoing for it allows the LOTE background learner to hear the correct form in the context of a conversation.

- When assessing the language used by LOTE background learners it is essential to keep in mind what is not being said. The student may be avoiding taking risks and confining him/herself to using only what s/he knows to be correct. It is important to constantly encourage students to experiment with new vocabulary and language forms. Any mistakes made can be discussed in context and so will be more relevant. These 'errors' provide an opportunity for teachers to reinforce what they may have taught and/or to plan for future sessions.

In many ABE classes there are L1 and L2 learners present. The students who are native speakers provide language role models for those who speak English as a second or subsequent language. Students who are native speakers of English are able to give feedback to the second language learners in an informal non-threatening way. The following chapter examines this and other advantages to be gained through the integration of both groups of students.

Chapter 8

Working Together

Mixed classes of ESB and LOTE background learners

Many ABE classes participating in the CGE for Adults include some students from a LOTE background as well as other students who were born in Australia and for whom English is their first language. Despite the fact that both groups of students have different language needs, this situation can prove to be beneficial for all those involved. This chapter focuses on the benefits that can be gained when both groups of students work together. Teachers need to be aware of how they can assist students in integrated classes to work together in an atmosphere of cooperative participation. The following list suggests some of the ways to create a supportive learning environment.

Strategies to Promote Confidence and Lessen Anxiety

- Provide activities that are planned so as to have successful outcomes.
- Build a supportive and cohesive atmosphere in which students feel free to express themselves orally.
- Allow students to make linguistic errors – to take risks among 'friends'.
- Pace lessons to learners' needs.

- Involve all students in the learning process. Provide opportunities for both teacher and learners to model language and provide feedback on language performance.

- Provide an atmosphere in which students can learn from each other ie. NESB students have the opportunity to practise speaking and listening with the ESB students. As a result, LOTE background students are more likely to experience and learn the use of slang and idioms. The ESB students can gain from the knowledge and skills of the LOTE background students. This is particularly so in a Numeracy/Literacy class.

Considerations in Integrating LOTE Background and ESB students

- It is important that teachers have:
  - insight into both fields;
  - knowledge of students' needs, methodologies and good teaching practice in both; and
  - time for the preparation of materials eg. culturally inclusive resources and concrete, manipulative and visual aids.

- Provision for team teaching or volunteer tutors to cater for the wide range of literacy needs and abilities.

- Classroom organisation that allows for students to contribute and learn effectively such as:
  - activities that involve individual, pair and group work;
  - involvement of students in the teaching process;
  - use of work sheets with self checking sections; and
  - development of learning to learn strategies so that students consult each other and references eg. dictionaries.

- Professional development for teachers to:
  - increase their knowledge of LOTE background students;
  - enhance their basic knowledge of linguistics; and
  - discuss methodological issues including curriculum and course planning, language teaching strategies and classroom management.

There are benefits to be gained for LOTE background learners and for ESB learners when they are in classes together. Some of these are outlined in the following table (Table 10).

Table 10: Advantages of integrating adult LOTE background and adult ESB students

Needs of adult LOTE background students →	**How adult ESB students can assist**
Confidence in participating in conversations	Provide feedback on language performance and noticed improvements
Writing skills particularly for personal writing	Assist with grammar and the use of appropriate words
Vocabulary extension	Provide opportunities for ESL students to extend vocabulary in a supportive environment
Listening skills, including strategies for clarifying information	Provide opportunities for ESL students to practise listening in a supportive environment
Pronunciation skills	Provide assistance and feedback
Needs of adult ESB students →	**How adult LOTE background students can assist**
Note-taking and study skills	Share their ideas on the use of abbreviations and other organisational study skills
Spelling	Share the spelling strategies they have developed in learning English, like prediction and visual memory skills and the use of a spelling dictionary
Confidence-building for formal oral situations like job interviews	Provide opportunities to role-play interview situations
Writing letters, factual reports and job applications	Encourage and support each other through conferencing and group writing
Understanding of mathematical concepts and processes	Provide explanation and reinforcement of mathematical processes

adapted from John, M., (1992)

In addition to the advantages outlined above, in classes where native speakers and LOTE background learners are together, many students who are native speakers develop an appreciation of their own language and an awareness of the difficulties faced by second language learners.

As stated in the report, *The Pedagogical Relations between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy* (Hammond et al, 1992) "It is likely that there will be more, rather than fewer, classes combining ESB and LOTE background learners in the future". In terms of their approaches to curriculum and perceived learning considerations we believe there are differences between teachers of LOTE background students and teachers of ESB students. In addition there is great disparity between the types of students involved, although many do experience similar motivating factors.

It has been the purpose of this chapter to look at strategies that can be employed by all teachers to foster a sense of self confidence in all students and provide a supportive learning environment. Whilst the learning needs of both groups of students are different, these differences can be complementary. LOTE background students are able to assist ESB students with skills which may include note taking, study skills and maths, while ESB students provide a model for pronunciation and the use of grammar and an opportunity for LOTE background students to converse. It is with a positive attitude, openness and flexibility that the teachers from these two differing backgrounds can support each other and share their expertise to make the integration process a positive one, enhancing the development of literacy skills in all learners.

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Appendices

A: **Background Information Chart** in Hoy, K., 1988, *Access to Literacy*, Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, p 22-23.

B: **Influence of cultural attitudes to knowledge on teaching and learning strategies** in Mezger, J., 1992, *Bridging the Intercultural Communication Gap: A Guide for TAFE Teachers of International Students*, National TAFE Overseas Network, Hobart, Tasmania.

C: **Common Classroom Idioms** in Mezger, J., 1992, *Bridging the Intercultural Communication Gap: A Guide for TAFE Teachers of International Students*, National TAFE Overseas Network, Hobart, Tasmania, p 189-190.

D: **'Revising a First Draft – A Form for Students to Use'** from Lyons, S., *An Assessment Guide for Basic Education Programs in Victoria*.

E: **COVER SHEET for WRITING** from Lyons, S., *An Assessment Guide for Basic Education Programs in Victoria*.

F: **Student Sheets for ORACY: SELF EXPRESSION**

G: **Student Sheets for ORACY: PRACTICAL PURPOSES**

H: **Student Sheets for ORACY: KNOWLEDGE**

I: **Student Sheets for ORACY: PUBLIC DEBATE**

J: **Correction Code for Student Writing** from Learmonth, P., 1994, *Men and Women: Roles and Relationships*, AMES, Victoria.

Appendix A: Background Information Chart

This chart gives background information on the major migrant groups which include secondary-aged students who are semi-literate or non-literate in L1.

ETHNIC GROUPS	Estimate of the total number of this group in Australia	Probable language(s) spoken before coming to Australia, and in the home now	Some relevant a) spoken b) written c) general features of these languages
VIETNAMESE	72 500	Vietnamese	**Vietnamese** a) spoken language – tonal b) written language – same script as English but with extensive use of diacritical marks – script goes from left to right ⟶ c) general – mainly monosyllabic – no plural forms – no articles
		Chinese*	**Chinese** (see * below)
		French	**French** was the language medium for education and lingua franca at least till 1954 and may be a means of communicating with older people.
CAMBODIAN/ KAMPUCHEAN	11 600	Khmer	**Khmer** a) spoken language – not tonal – many complex consonant clusters and diphthongs b) written language – non-Roman alphabet based on Indic language of southern India – script goes from left to right – less punctuation than English ⟶
		French	
		Chinese*	**Chinese** (see * below)
		Vietnamese	**Vietnamese** (see above)
LAOTIAN	7 100	Lao	**Lao** a) spoken language – tonal b) written language – non-Roman alphabet based on Sanskrit and Pali – script goes from left to right ⟶ c) general – to a certain extent monosyllabic – no plural forms – no articles
		French	
		Chinese*	**Chinese** (see * below)
		Hmong Mhong	**Hmong** – a language of one of the hill peoples (c 10% of the Lao pop.)
LEBANESE	56 300	Arabic (usually a version slightly different from classical Arabic)	**Arabic** a) spoken language – usually slightly different from classical, written Arabic (as are most versions of spoken Arabic) b) written language – non-Roman script – script goes from right to left – phonetically written language with vowels sometimes indicated by diacritical marks ⟵
		French	
		Armenian	
		Turkish	
EAST TIMORESE	6–7000[1]	Chinese * (mostly Hakka)	**Chinese** (see * below)
		Tetum	**Tetum** b) written language – not written at all till 1972, then written phonetically c) general – fewer consonants than English – fewer vowels than English
		Portuguese	
		Indonesian (Bahasa)	
ASSYRIAN	17 500[1]	Arabic	**Arabic** (see above)
		Assyrian Aramaic	**Assyrian Aramaic** b) written languages – alphabetic script based on cuneiform – script goes from right to left ⟵
CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN		Spanish	**Spanish** a) spoken language – no difference between the sounds 'b' and 'v' b) written language – Roman script which goes from left to right ⟶ c) general – South American Spanish may be slightly different from Iberian Spanish
e.g. EL SALVADOR	2 200[1]		
ARGENTINA	9 400		
CHILE	16 000		
URUGUAY	10 200		
OTHER	16 600	Portuguese	**Portuguese** is the main language spoken in Brazil
	1 Underlined figures in this column have been obtained from interviews in 1985 with organisations associated with these groups. These figures could include family members born in Australia or elsewhere. All other figures in this column are from Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs official estimates for June 1984, and apply to people *born* in the relevant country.	* Chinese (many dialects, e.g. Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka) N.B. Chinese is treated as a *language only* in this table because the language is used by several ethnic groups. It will, of course also be used by ethnic Chinese.	* **Chinese** a) spoken language – tonal (b) written language – non-alphabetic, ideographic – large number of 'characters' – 2 ways of writing, reading: i) traditional – start at the top RH corner and read/write downwards ↓ ii) sometimes Chinese is now printed horizontally, going from left to right like English ⟶

Appendix A: Background Information Chart

Type of education system in country of origin (or transit) N.B. Some of the Indo-Chinese refugee camps have organised primary classes, but very few have secondary classes.	Possible reasons for leaving country of origin, and possible pathways to Australia	Possible parental attitudes to and expectations of education and teachers
– old system was modelled on the French – much disruption caused by war – centralized curriculum – promotion is not automatic, it is based on ability	– war – refugees – escape from what was seen as an undesirable environment – to join family – may have come via camps, after a hazardous journey	– parents would probably expect rote learning, may not encourage children to question the teacher – respect for teachers was traditional – not much involvement with school – group work would be an unfamiliar teaching approach to most Vietnamese parents – parents may prefer authoritarian approach from teachers (corporal punishment is acceptable), with competitive assessment (exams, scores, ranking.)
– not many trained teachers – oldest students *may* have experience of a formal education system – all schools, colleges, universities closed in 1975 – others exist now – students may have had a little basic schooling in camps	– war – refugees – may have come via camps, after a hazardous journey	– students may not be living in a family group – traditionally, not much involvement with school unless child was having problems – parents trusted teachers to deal with education – lectures, rote learning used to be common
– oldest students may have gone through the old (French) system – others will have varied experiences, some with very minimal exposure to formal education, others well-educated	– war – refugees – may have come via camps, after a long stay	– educational welfare of children traditionally left to teachers – rote learning, recitation, little open questioning of the teacher – lack of English may inhibit parents from seeking contact with schools and teachers
– well-developed cosmopolitan system of education, including tertiary institutions – students from Beirut or Tripoli could have had very disrupted education	– war – deliberate choice for personal reasons	– both moral and academic strictness in education is valued, so parents may find the apparent 'freedom' of Australian education very different to their own experience of education – traditional interests and ambitions of the Lebanese in Australia have tended to be entrepreneurial
– schooling limited pre-1975 – after 1975, access only for Indonesians – Chinese schools operated pre-1975 – some students may have been to school in Portugal	– war – refugees – to join family – could have come via Portugal, via Indonesia or via both these places	– most Timorese-Hakka parents would expect the school to take care of education – could be wary of becoming involved because of lack of knowledge of English, and of the Australian education system
– could have been very disrupted if family has travelled a lot	– looking for religious freedom – family reunion – could have come direct from Iran, or Iraq to Greece or Italy then Australia, or Iraq to Syria to Lebanon then Australia	– traditional orientation of the family strongly patriarchal – also traditional respect for teachers and authority – because of restrictions on education in Iraq pre-1960, some Assyrian parents, particularly mothers, may have had little formal education
– students from city backgrounds have probably experienced school as an important part of life, though schooling may have been disrupted – school attendance could have been limited or interrupted by participation in community rural economy for rural background students	– war – deliberate choice	– students would usually be living in a family group – parents would expect to be actively involved in education

Attitudes to Knowledge		← Conserving		Extending →
Learning approaches		Reproductive ←	→ Analytical ←	→ Speculative
Teaching strategies	Role of Teacher	• almost exclusive source of - knowledge - direction/guidance - assessment	• co-ordinator of learning resources • questioner, critical guide, gadfly • principal source of assessment	• more experienced colleague and collaborator • preliminary critic and adviser • patron
	Characteristics Activities	• transmission of information and demonstration of skills • overt moral and social training	• analysis of information and ideas within interpretive frameworks • modelling of/demand for critical approach to approach to knowledgement and conventions	• discussion/advice on ideas and methods on individuals basis • modelling of hypothetical and creative thinking • collaborative search for new ideas
	Assessment	• tests of memory recall and practical demonstration of skills • emphasis on replication • geared to ranking	• assignments/exams requiring critical analytical and problem-solving • emphasis on: - originality - quality of interpretation	• independent research - thesis and papers of publishable quality • 'contribution to the field of knowledge'
	Aim	• simple ('unreconstructed') transfer of knowledgement and skills	• independent and critical styles of thinking • development of capacity for theory and abstraction	• development of speculative, critical intelligence • expansion of knowledge base (theiry, data, techniques)
		▲ ▼	▲ ▼	▲ ▼
Learning stragegies	Type	• memorisation and imitation	• analytical and critical thinking	• speculating, hypothesising
	Activities	• sumarising, describing, identifying, and applying formulae and information	• questioning, judging, and recombining ideas and information into an argument	• research design, implementation and reporting • deliberate search for new ideas, data explanations
	Characteristics Questions	• what?	• why? how? how valid? how important?	• what if?
	Aim	• 'correctness'	• 'simple' originally, reshaping material into a different pattern	• 'creative' originality, totally new approach/new knowledge

Acknowledgement: Ballard & Clanchy 1991 page 13

Appendix C: Common Classroom Idioms

An idiom is an expression or number of words, which, when taken together, has a different meaning from the individual words when they stand alone.

Find
'How did you find it'
'Did you find time for'
'To find one's feet'

Kick
'You can stay in the classroom, at the party, in the library, until they kick you out'
'His father kicked the bucket'

Mind
'Mind your step'
'Would you mind'

Get
'Get your act together'
'Get a move on'
'Did you get out of bed on the wrong side this morning'

Thin
'His analysis of the problem was a bit thin on the ground'

Hard
'We will be hard pressed to finish all this by the end of the lesson'

Flat out
'You will have to go flat out if you aim to finish the assignment in time'

Pull
'He was only pulling your leg'
'If everyone pulls their weight'
'If you intend passing the exam, you will have to pull up your socks'

Break
'We need to break the back of this part of the syllabus by the end of the first term'
'Everyone was quiet and shy at the beginning of the first lesson but the teacher managed to *break the ice* giving humorous examples about the topic'

Face
'It's time you faced the music'
'Face up to your problem'

Beat
'I wish he would stop beating around the bush'

Crop up
'You might find that problems crop up once you investigate further'

Down the track
'I will discuss that problem when we are a bit further down the track'

Take
Will everybody please take a chair'

Yell/Sing
'Please yell/sing out if you have any problems'

Okay (OK)
It's okay if you want to do it that way'

Go
'How did you go with the exercise'
'How are you going'

Appendix D: 'Revising a First Draft – A Form for Student to Use'

(SAMPLE)

Writing – Revising a First Draft — Form for Students to Use

Name ..... Date .....

Title of piece of writing .....

Task – What have I been asked to write? .....

.....

Type of writing .....

Questions for students to answer when revising a first draft.
First read your piece of writing out loud to yourself, or to a friend.
Then answer these questions.

1. What is the main purpose of this piece of writing? .....
   .....
2. Does it say what I want it to say? .....
3. Are my ideas presented in the best order? .....
4. Do I think the meaning will be clear to other readers? .....
5. What message am I trying to give to other readers? .....
   .....
6. What effect do I want this writing to have on the readers? .....
7. Should I add anything? .....
8. Should I take anything out? .....
9. Am I happy with:
   the title – Does it fit the piece? Does it sound interesting? .....
   the beginning – Does it introduce the piece? .....
   the end – Does it finish off the piece of writing? .....
10. Are there any improvements to be made? .....
    .....
    .....

Questions for students to answer when proof-reading a first draft.
Answer after completing the above questions.

1. Are the sentences linked in a logical way? .....
2. Does each paragraph have one main idea? .....
3. Are the paragraphs linked in a logical way? .....
4. Do I vary the length of the sentences enough? .....
5. Am I happy with my choice of words? .....
6. Am I too wordy at times? .....
7. Have I checked the grammar? .....
8. Have I checked the punctuation? .....
9. Have I checked the spelling of any words that I am not sure of? .....
10. Is this a piece I would like to prepare for publishing in the student magazine? .....

Discuss these editing questions with someone who will help you edit your work.

Appendix E: Cover Sheet for Writing

(SAMPLE)

Student to complete

Task Number ..... COVER SHEET for **WRITING**

Name ..... Teacher ..... Class .....

Title of Student's Writing .....

Description of the Task set at Level _____

.....

.....

Choose the element/s below which is/are being assessed in this task and the conditions set:
Writing for: Self-Expression / Practical Purposes / Knowledge / Public Debate

Conditions: individual assisted product / individual independent product / group product

Teacher to complete First Draft Submitted – Date .....

Teacher's comments on student's writing:

1. Subject Matter .....
2. Tone .....
3. Language Used .....
4. Structure and Organisation .....
5. Spelling .....
6. Grammar .....

Other Comments .....

Signature of teacher .....

Teacher's comments Final Draft Submitted – Date .....

This task demonstrates competence of Element/s _____ in the Reading and Writing Module.

Signature of teacher .....

Sample – Student to complete

ORACY – SELF EXPRESSION *Type A*

Name _____

Teacher _____

Class _____

Dates from _____ to _____

Description of Tasks _____

Teacher's feedback to students:

When speaking and listening in conversations, you show that you can

1. start conversations _____
2. finish conversations _____
3. take turns _____
4. choose different topics to talk about _____
5. show interest _____
6. speak with appropriate volume and speed _____
7. use appropriate body language _____
8. ask the other people if they understand what you have said _____
9. ask the other people for their opinions _____
10. recognise the other people's opinions and respond to them _____
11. pronounce and use language in a way that does not interfere with your message _____
12. ask questions and respond to questions from others _____

Teacher's comment: _____

_____

_____

This work demonstrates/does not demonstrate competency

Date _____ Signature of teacher _____

Appendix G: Student Sheets for ORACY: PRACTICAL PURPOSES

Sample – Student to complete

ORACY – PRACTICAL PURPOSES *Type A*

Name _____

Teacher _____

Class _____

Dates _____ **Time limit** _____

Description of Tasks _____

Teacher's feedback to students:

When giving a practical demonstration or asking for information in an exchange you show that you can

1. state the purpose of the demonstration/exchange _____
2. describe what to do/what you want _____
3. give reasons why you do it that way/why you want it _____
4. organise the demonstration/exchange in a logical way _____
5. ask the listeners if they have done this before, and if they understand _____
6. repeat and summarise the information to help listeners understand _____
7. organise the time available well _____
8. ask for questions, opinions, information and/or feelings from the audience _____
9. speak with appropriate speed and volume _____
10. make eye contact (when appropriate) _____
11. use concrete materials well (when appropriate) _____
12. pronounce and use language in a way that does not interfere with your message _____

When a listener, you show that you can:

13. ask questions and give information and opinions _____

Teacher's comment: _____

_____

_____

This work demonstrates/does not demonstrate competency

Date _____ Signature of teacher _____

Appendix H: Student Sheets for ORACY: KNOWLEDGE

Sample – Student to complete

ORACY – KNOWLEDGE *Type A*

Name _____

Teacher _____

Class _____

Dates _____ **Time limit** _____

Description of Tasks _____

Teacher's feedback to students:

When giving a talk, you show that you can

1. introduce the topic _____
2. describe the information and explain words that might be new to your audience _____
3. give reasons for what you say _____
4. present the talk in a logical order _____
5. repeat and summarise information to help your audience understand _____
6. conclude the talk _____
7. speak with appropriate volume and speed _____
8. make eye contact _____
9. use notes instead of reading your text _____
10. speak for the time limit _____
11. use visual aids to support your talk _____
12. pronounce and use language in a way that does not interfere with your message _____

When a listener in the audience, you show that you can:

13. ask questions and make comments after the talk _____

Teacher's comment: _____

_____

_____

This work demonstrates/does not demonstrate competency

Date _____ Signature of teacher _____

Appendix I: Student Sheets for ORACY: PUBLIC DEBATE

Sample – Student to complete

ORACY – PUBLIC DEBATE *Type A*

Name _____

Teacher _____

Class _____

Dates from _____ to _____

Description of Tasks _____

Teacher's feedback to students:

When speaking and listening in group discussions, you show that you can

1. describe an issue _____
2. give your opinion _____
3. give reasons for your opinion _____
4. summarise the main ideas _____
5. check to see if other people understand _____
6. listen to others' opinions and respond to them appropriately _____
7. take turns _____
8. pronounce and use language in a way that does not interfere with your message _____
9. question information and opinions given by others _____
10. work cooperatively towards reaching an agreement _____

Teacher's comment: _____

_____

_____

This work demonstrates/does not demonstrate competency

Date _____ Signature of teacher _____

Appendix J: Correction Code for Student Writing

CORRECTION CODE FOR WRITING DRAFTS

Many teachers find a correction code useful to mark students' writing drafts because they are less teacher-directed and encourage students to take more responsibility for their own work. This code may be used as is, or adapted to focus on particular language features or group/language background writing problems. It is suggested that the elements of the code be introduced over a period of time.

Photocopy for classroom use

✓	= good
✓✓	= very good
✓✓✓	= great!
MW ^	= missing word
WW	= wrong word
PL	= plural
SING	= singular
T	= wrong tense
CAP	= capital letter
SL	= small letter
( )	= delete
SP	= wrong spelling
ART ^	= article (a, an)
DEF ART ^	= definite article (the)
WO	= word order wrong
↶↷	= switch
O	= punctuation
?	= sorry, but what do you mean?

A Teacher's Guide to ENHANCING LITERACY for Learners with Diverse Language and Cultural Backgrounds, who are studying in Adult Basic Education Programs

by Carol Dixon and Sara Lyons,
Holmesglen College of TAFE, Victoria.

Published by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Victoria.

This material has been written to support the Certificates of General Education for Adults, however it has applications in a wide range of adult basic education contexts.

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